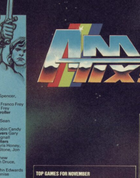

AM-TIX!
A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION
No.1 NOVEMBER 1985
£1
MONTHLY SOFTWARE REVIEW FOR THE
AMSTRAD COMPUTERS
TOP GAMES
Sorcery Plus
Highway Encounter
Red Moon
On the Run
Dragontorc
Previewed
DR WHO
Micro Power
AMTECH
Arnor's Protext
Browsing through CPM
Tasword & Masterfile join forces
Pride & Discovery
MAPS!
Everyone's a Wally
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Dun Darach
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ISSUE 1 NOVEMBER 1985

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*A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION*

Cover by Oliver Frey



## TOP GAMES FOR NOVEMBER



## AMTIX! COMPETITIONS



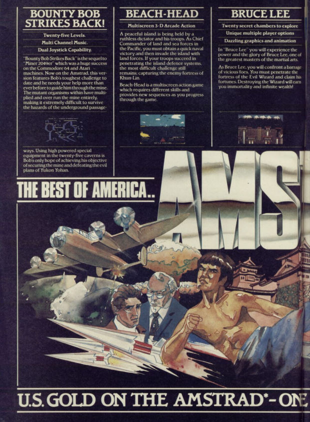
## NOVEMBER SPECIALS



## THE MAIN HEADINGS



The next issue of AMTIX! goes on sale Thursday November 14. Missing it would be like having your brain removed.



BOUNTY BOB STRIKES BACK!
Twenty-five Levels.
Multi Channel Music.
Dual Joystick Capability.
"Bounty Bob Strikes Back" is the sequel to "Miner 2049er" which was a huge success on the Commodore 64 and Atari machines. Now on the Amstrad, this version features Bob's toughest challenge to date and he needs your help more than ever before to guide him through the mine. The mutant organisms within have multiplied and over run the mine entirely, making it extremely difficult to survive the hazards of the underground passageways. Using high powered special equipment in the twenty-five caverns is Bob's only hope of achieving his objective of securing the mine and defeating the evil plans of Yukon Yohan.
BEACH-HEAD
Multiscreen 3-D Arcade Action
A peaceful island is being held by a ruthless dictator and his troops. As Chief Commander of land and sea forces in the Pacific, you must obtain a quick naval victory and then invade the island with land forces. If your troops succeed in penetrating the island defence systems, the most difficult challenge still remains; capturing the enemy fortress of Khun-Lin.
Beach-Head is a multiscreen action game which requires different skills and provides new sequences as you progress through the game.
BRUCE LEE
Twenty secret chambers to explore
Unique multiple player options
Dazzling graphics and animation
In "Bruce Lee" you will experience the power and the glory of Bruce Lee, one of the greatest masters of the martial arts.
As Bruce Lee, you will confront a barrage of vicious foes. You must penetrate the fortress of the Evil Wizard and claim his fortunes. Destroying the Wizard will earn you immortality and infinite wealth!
THE BEST OF AMERICA..
AMS
U.S. GOLD ON THE AMSTRAD*- ONE


RAID!
Gripping Arcade Action
Multiple 3-D Scrolling Screens
The scene is one of World-wide conflict. The only hope of saving the World from nuclear annihilation is an attack by stealth bombers on the launch sites.
As squadron leader, you must lead your troops on a virtual suicide mission; knock-out the launch sites, and proceed to the command headquarters. Armed only with the weapons you carry, you must destroy the defence centre and stop the attack!
DAMBUSTERS
Superb Graphics and Sound
At 21.15 hours on the evening of May 16th 1943, a flight of specially prepared Lancaster bombers left R.A.F. Scampton for Germany. And so, one of the most daring and courageous raids of the Second World War was underway. Now you have the opportunity to relive the drama and excitement of this famous action via your Amstrad computer. You will take the parts of Pilot, Navigator, Front and Rear Gunners, Bomb Aimer and Flight Engineer as you play this authentic reconstruction of the night's events. The multiple screen action is complemented by a comprehensive package of flight documents and authentic material from the period.
IMPOSSIBLE MISSION
Game of the Year 1985 - British Micro Awards
Message from the Agency computer..... "....Your mission, Agent 4125 is to foil a horrible plot. From an underground laboratory, Elvin, the scientist, is holding the world hostage under threat of nuclear annihilation. You must penetrate his stronghold, avoid his human-seeking robots and find pieces of the security code.
Somersault over the robots or use a precious snooze code to deactivate them long enough to search each room. Use the Agency's computer to unscramble the passwords from the code pieces, or try to solve them yourself. You'd better beware.....This mission is stamped IMPOSSIBLE!"
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GREAT GAME AFTER ANOTHER!
*All screen shots as seen on the Commodore 64




## LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

**It's almost two years to the day since I found myself sitting down to write the first editorial for CRASH magazine (issue 1 was delayed until January however!), and I said then, that it's difficult to know what to say in a first issue except, 'Hi!' and, 'Hope you enjoy it!'**

CRASH has proved to be a great and enduring success, enjoyed by 100,000 readers a month. I hope AMTIX! will be received in similar fashion. Well that's down to us, the team, to provide you with a stimulating publication, but it's also your responsibility to react to us and to AMTIX! A specialist magazine can take the view that, staffed by experts, it tells you what's what and why; or it can take the view that, staffed by professional enthusiasts, it speaks its mind and listens to the feedback of the readers. After all, what is a magazine? Some printed paper stitched in the middle? Certainly, but more than that, it is a readership, a two-way relationship between a few people with things to say who have, through circumstances, had the good luck to be in a position to say and distribute them and a lot of people who not only want to hear what is said, but comment on it. Needless to say, we want to take the latter course, so your feedback is vital to AMTIX!

Support of the software and hardware trade is also an important element. Specialist magazines exist in a symbiotic relationship with their 'advertisers'. We need the revenue from their advertisements and they need the publicity we offer. The reader likes to know what is new and likes some critical appraisal. This may or may not benefit the supplier/advertiser, depending on the nature of the criticism, but what is also essential is that a magazine should be able to feed information given by readers back to the industry so it is able to assess the value of a product to the reader. This makes a magazine like AMTIX! very much a forum of ideas and feelings, not just a fountain of information — an interface, if you like, between the 'industry' and its buying public.

Enthusiasts we may be, but some of the team have gained a lot of experience in the past year and a half. Let's have a look at some of the people involved and explain a few things necessary to understanding how AMTIX! is going to work.

**Roger Kean**

## THE TEAM IN BRIEF

**Roger Kean** Publisher and co-editor: after a misspent period at Hornsey College of Art, went to the London Film School and found his first metier as a film editor, cutting numerous TV films in the course of some seven years before turning to publishing. He launched the Spectrum software magazine CRASH two years ago together with his partners Oliver and Franco Frey, and edited it until four months ago when he took over editorship of Newsfield's Commodore software magazine, ZZAP! 64. He is now responsible for 'overseeing' the launch of AMTIX! Roger still paints occasionally, though his palette has largely been reduced to what Dulux have on offer, and his ambition is still that of having a novel published. If at first you don't succeed . . .

**Jeremy Spencer** Co-Editor: has, for the past nine months, been the software editor of CRASH, and in that time has almost learned how to write and spell (reading was never a problem). His spelling has improved significantly since installing several word processor packages onto his collection of Amstrad computers and then studying their spellchecker dictionaries. He also has the distinction of being one of the first ever owners of an Amstrad — a true love affair. Apart from gaining loads of experience with Spectrum games and utility software, Jeremy has the distinction of being the person who introduced Newsfield to the Amstrad, when he brought a 464 into the office on which to do his writing, saying he couldn't bear the office Apricots. Don't whisper this to too many Spectrum owners, but since Jeremy, much of CRASH has actually been written on Amstrads.

**Oliver Frey**: Art Editor has a long history of illustration, kicking off with IPC's *War Picture Library* series of comics. He designed the Superman comic used in the opening sequence of the film *Superman I*, has drawn Dan Dare for *Eagle* comic and The Trigan Empire strip for *Look and Learn* among many others. Oliver founded Newsfield together with his brother, Franco, and Roger Kean and has been responsible for almost all the drawings inside CRASH, ZZAP! and every one of their covers. He'll be doing the same for AMTIX!

**Sean Masterson**: has worked for Games Workshop (Manchester) and written extensively for *White Dwarf* and *Imagine* magazines on such esoteric subjects as the inner workings of role playing games. His specialist interests are adventure and strategy games, which he will be looking after in AMTIX! Despite remarks to the contrary elsewhere in this issue, Sean is not an Irish leprachaun. He's also a science fiction nut, but no one holds that against him.

**Gary Liddon**: has had a major passion for the Amstrad computers since they arrived on the scene. Gary wrote games reviews for *Big K* magazine, and worked for Domark before joining AMTIX! as a software reviewer. Apart from enthusiasm, he brings his joystick to his work and claims that he was really the winner of the Orpington Grotesque T-shirt Award for three years running and not, as unfairly claimed, the software editor of a certain other new Amstrad magazine.

**Robin Candy**: Amtips Editor, youngest member of the team, is in his last year at school. For over 18 months, he has been reviewing Spectrum games and utility software for CRASH and has written the playing tips column in CRASH for a year. For the past three months he has been playing every game available on the Amstrad and has compiled the guide to games that starts in this first issue. Robin's main claim to fame, however, is that he is the only Ludlow native on the team (except Matthew Uffindell who operates the process camera that brings you these pages). He can be difficult to work with, but he says that's only to be expected of a genius.

**Franco Frey**: Technical Editor, is Oliver's younger brother — 'nuff said? After a brilliant period at Zurich Polytechnic, he turned down an offer to design cars for BMW in Germany, and joined his father's electronics design company in Britain instead. As a result he's poor instead of rich, but he did get to design a lot of mechanical/electronic gadgets instead, and was still doing that when Oliver and Roger Kean told him that publishing magazines turns you into millionaires. So they lied, but now Franco can write interesting things about electronic gadgets instead of making them, and you can't deny that that's a much more comfortable way of being poor.

## AMTECH

AMTIX! will be dealing with what's usually called 'serious software' as well as games. The variety and quality of CP/M software, accounts and word processing packages for Amstrad computers is staggering. Over the coming months AMTIX! will investigate every aspect of this software and related hardware as well as reporting on the latest developments and releases. Most of this material will be written by freelance contributors, all experts in their various fields, but you can be fairly sure that anything to do with word processing will be in-house. Newsfield Publications threw the last typewriter out of the window well over a year ago (except Lloyd Mangram's 1922 Hermes which he uses for

## THE COMPLETE GAMES GUIDE

Mini reviews of the following games are to be found in this issue



*MORE NEXT MONTH . . .*



editing the letters pages of CRASH and ZZAP!) All the magazines are written on a mixture of Apricots (xi's, PC's F10's) and Amstrads (464's, 664's and 6128's), using *Word Star, Super Writer* and *Tasword*.

The Apricots link via floppies usually, but via RS232 to the 6128. We also type in material on several NEC portable computers and dump the text files to either an Apricot or an Amstrad when required.

What this means, is that the AMTIX! team has become pretty expert when it comes to word processors and how they ought to operate!

## MAIL ORDER

Two and a half years ago, CRASH pioneered the concept of running a related software mail order with a magazine (up until then, it was considered a trifle unethical for some unexplained reason). It was a huge success. With the addition of the Commodore magazine ZZAP! 64, the mail order really boomed, so that now Newsfield runs probably the biggest software mail order business in the country. Oddly enough, other magazines have begun to do the same.

Naturally, with the advent of AMTIX!, software for the Amstrad has been added to the mail order department. Generally speaking, you can order almost any software for your computer, and it is sent to you post included in the retail price. Most popular software is kept in stock at our Ludlow premises and is available immediately, but some of the more obscure programs may take a little longer. The advantage this brings is that you can order programs from several sources with one payment at one time and probably receive a discount. One thing we are not, however, is a discount mail order business selling games etc at half price. AMTIX! is not in business to help destroy the business. However, any special offers going, we'll try to get for you!

You can find more details on how to use AMTIX! Mail order in this issue.

### ADVERTISERS' INDEX



## GAMES REVIEWS

All the games to be reviewed are turned over to several people of varying ages, five of them in-house as well as three outside reviewers who attend local schools. Their critical reports are collated by Gary Liddon and Sean Masterson, and the three with the best Use of English appear under the heading 'CRITICISM'. The several ratings are also collated as an average and given at the end of each review. In this way, AMTIX! aims to present the optimum balance in reviewing a game. Personal prejudices, naturally, still apply, but hopefully they are evened out, and we expect to hear your views as well, once the issue is out.

### THE RATINGS

**Presentation**: takes into account quality and appearance of cover, quality of inlay and on-screen instructions, availability and friendliness of game options, ease of joystick and keyboard control, presentation of menu options, hi-score tables and the instant visual appeal of the game.
**Graphics**: the overall quality of detail, animation, use of colour and smoothness of movement.
**Sound**: general quality of sound effects (FX) technically and aesthetically, whether there is music and is it good?
**Playability**: how much fun is the game to play immediately, is it easy to get into?
**Addictive qualities**: how long will you want to keep on playing it?
**Value for money**: taking into account the above ratings, is it worth shelling out the asking price?
**Overall**: a free for all vote from the reviewers that takes into account all of the above.

With each rating, you will notice there is a short comment. This is designed to qualify some details that formed the reviewer's collective opinions on the individual rating given, and may be used by the reader to assess his own opinion on that rating.

With each game review it is assumed that the program will run on any of the Amstrad machines UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED. Similarly, it is assumed that the program runs with joystick control unless otherwise stated.

Adventure and Strategy reviews are handled in a slightly different manner, in as much as Sean comments on his own in these more specialised areas. The ratings also differ to take account of the varied play requirements.

### THE AMTIX! ACCOLADE

This monthly award is given to games, business or utility software which, in the opinion of the team, offers outstanding quality and value. There may be more or less of these a month, depending on the software released, but you can be sure that receipt of an **AMTIX! ACCOLADE** will not be given lightly, and it will mean that software distributors should be stocking it well! Generally, to get an Accolade, a game will have to score over 90% on its Overall rating, although circumstances may modify this occasionally.

### PROGRAMS REVIEWED IN THIS ISSUE



# ON THE SPOT

**There will be two readers' letters columns in AMTIX! 'On the Spot' is a general forum where you can put us, yourselves or the computer industry on the spot. This is where you can tell other readers what you think about — well, everything to do with the magazine (are we doing it right or wrong?), the software and hardware, life, the universe and everything.**

**The second column, 'LETTERTECH', is designed more specifically for people who want to write and let us know things about business, educational and utility software/hardware.**

**Of course, we don't expect you to write to us purely out of love (though that would be nice), so each month one letter of outstanding merit (or something like that) will be chosen as letter of the month for ON THE SPOT, and its writer will receive £20 worth of software of their choice.**

**As this is the first issue, we haven't got many letters yet! However, there has been some reaction to the PCW Show special AMTIX! issue zero. We'll try and avoid too much of that congratulatory back-slapping that tends to get printed in magazine letters columns, but perhaps we can be forgiven for this first one . . .**

Dear Amtix!
I bought the first issues of CRASH which was easily the best games magazine around, but when I sold my Spectrum and bought an Amstrad, there wasn't a good magazine available. I was beginning to give up hope until at the PCW Show I got a free taster of AMTIX!

At last — a decent magazine for the Amstrad had come out.

I have a few ideas that I hope you could include in the magazine:
a) A Hotline chart and a sales chart, as both are useful.
b) A list of all the best games should be printed each month and updated by replacing old games with new better ones of the same type.
c) Do not EVER print a program listing (except to get a POKE into a game).

I cannot suggest anything else as I don't know what the magazine does include yet. If you are still giving away £12 of software to the best letter, and I win, I would like *Frank Bruno's Boxing*.
**Arnold Sidebottom, Brentwood, Essex.**

*Arnold, as the FIRST EVER letter printed in AMTIX!, you can certainly have your software choice — and a bit more!*

*A Hotline Chart is a dead cert, but a sales chart may be a bit harder to accommodate. As to lists of games, well in a sense the magazine itself is just that. Program listings are extremely unlikely to appear in AMTIX! for the simple reason that we are against them ourselves (POKES excepted of course), unless they form a genuine part of some explanation.*

**The address to write to is ON THE SPOT, AMTIX! MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB.**

# WEEeeeee SPLAT! (gently)

*Yes it's true. The event that some members of the publishing and software industry have been waiting for.... In the Spring of 1986 the Newsfield Nutters are going to take a flying leap. Just as the spring flower poke their first wary leaves above ground, Newsfield will come thundering down upon them. But it's all in a Good Cause, because we want to raise money for DR. BARNARDO'S and THE ACTION GROUP.*

**AS IF LIFE** in the Tower wasn't exciting enough the AMTIX! **Soft in the ED**, ED, suggested that we all jump out of an aeroplane. Well, we all thought he was just being terribly rude, but the next thing we knew he was ringing up all sorts of organisations and even booking a Hercules with the Red Devils.

Franco Frey, being the nearest thing that we have to Action Man, expressed his delight at the idea. When we noticed him practising landings — jumping off every five foot wall he chanced upon — we realised it was time for some concerted action to stop this lunacy.



Unfortunately, we were too late by this stage. Not only had the pro-jump ranks swelled with the addition of Oli, but ED had even dreamed up a good reason why we had to do it. What decent sort of person could refuse an opportunity to raise money for charity? Even if it does mean throwing oneself out of a dowdy Hercules flying at an as yet unknown number of feet off the ground, and descending courtesy of an overgrown table-cloth?

The plan has now evolved fully. It seems that we are all going to put ourselves at your mercy: **you** will decide which six of us from the Towers are to perform this dreadful deed (well if you think it's so easy leaping from an aeroplane, why not go and try it for yourself! I mean when I joined this organisation I thought it was to write a about computer software . . . )

The whole plan is so simple even you can't back out, dear reader. Fill in the form below, naming your victim, yourself and filling in your address. You can have as many votes as you like but the cost of EACH vote is £1.00. All of the money that you send will be donated to **Dr Barnardo's** and **The Action Group**. Both charities are heavily into providing electronic aids for the handicapped. The Action Group also asked us to appeal for any unused computers, sick or fit, because they can put them to good use. We will tell you exactly how your money is going to be used in future issues.

Just to make things a bit more interesting, we are asking the software industry to donate lots of prizes for you to win. Answer the questions below and complete the tiebreaking phrase and you could be a winner. We don't know how many prizes there will be yet, but rest assured, there will be lots of lovely winnable thingies. Fret not, we will keep you posted in the issues leading up to the jump.

**I want . . . . . . . . . . . . to jump out of a very high flying Hercules (He or she may use a parachute at his or her discretion)**

**I enclose a donation of £ . . . . . . . (minimum of £1.00) and no coins, please. We get charged for receiving them.**

**I am frequently known as . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .**

**and can be reached at . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .**

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

**SEND YOUR VOTES AND LOOT (NO COINS!) to:**

***WEEeeeee SPLAT! PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB***

**THE COMPETITIONY BIT**

**Name three flight simulation games**

**(1)** . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

**(2)** . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

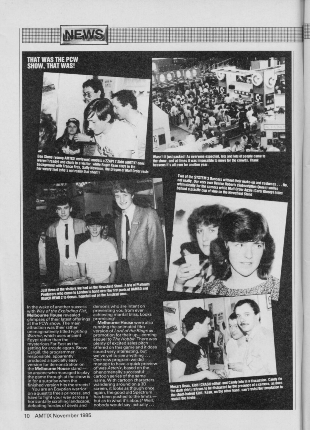
**(3)** . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

**In fifteen words or less, using your skill, judgement and a pen complete the phrase below in the most apt and original way . . . .**

**I WANT SEAN MASTERSON TO JUMP BECAUSE**

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

**STOP PRESS! Oli offers original cover painting as a prize for the voters in the Loony Leap Charity Competition!**



## THAT WAS THE PCW SHOW, THAT WAS!

Ben Stone (young AMTIX! reviewer) models a ZZAP! T Shirt (AMTIX! ones weren't ready) and chats to a visitor, while Roger Kean stays in the background with Franco Frey. Sally Newman, the Dragon of Mail Order rests her weary feet (she's not really that short!)

Wasn't it just packed! As everyone expected, lots and lots of people came to the show, and at times it was impossible to move for the crowds. Thank heavens it's all over for another year.

Two of the SYSTEM 3 Dancers without their make-up and costumes . . . No, not really. Our very own Denise Roberts (Subscription Queen) smiles whimsically for the camera while Mail Order Aggie (Carol Kinsey) hides behind a plastic cup of vino on the Newsfield Stand

Just three of the visitors we had on the Newsfield Stand. A trio of Platinum Producers who came to London to hand over the first parts of RAMBO and BEACH HEAD 2 to Ocean, hopefull out on the Amstrad soon.

In the wake of another success with *Way of the Exploding Fist*, **Melbourne House** revealed glimpses of their latest offerings at the PCW show. The main attraction was their rather unimaginatively titled *Fighting Warrior*, which uses ancient Egypt rather than the mysterious Far East as the setting for arcade aggro. Steve Cargill, the programmer responsible, apparently produced a specially easy version for demonstration on the **Melbourne House** stand — so anyone who managed to play the game through at the show is in for a surprise when the finished version hits the streets!

You are an Egyptian warrior on a quest to free a princess, and have to fight your way across a horizontally scrolling landscape, defeating hordes of devils and demons who are intent on preventing you from ever achieving marital bliss. Looks promising!

**Melbourne House** were also running the animated film version of *Lord of the Rings* as promotion for their up—coming sequel to *The Hobbit*. There was plenty of excited sales pitch offered on this game and it does sound very interesting, but we've yet to see anything . . . One new program we did manage to have a quick preview of was *Asterix*, based on the phenomenally successful cartoon series of the same name. With cartoon characters wandering around on a 3D screen, it looks as though once again, the good old Spectrum has been pushed to the limits — but as to what it's about? Well, nobody would say, actually . . .

Messrs Kean, Kidd (CRASH editor) and Candy join in a discussion. Candy (in the dark shirt) refuses to be distracted by the presence of a camera, as does the short-haired Kidd. Kean, on the other hand, can't resist the temptation to watch the birdie . . .

## MACHINE CODE CAN BE GOOD FOR YOU

Flushed with the success of their *Machine Code Tutor* **New Generation** seemed to have realised the potential of the Amstrad market, the sales of their *Tutor* 'Surpassed all of of expectations'. Now they plan to unleash their other titles onto us poor Amsters. *Jonah Barrington's Squash* will be released on the 2nd of October. *Trashman* and *Travels with Trashman* will be released on the 23rd of October and 13th of November. As soon as they have finished all of that hard conversion work they will set to producing the third in the series, *Trashman Goes Moonlighting*, a tale of poverty, inflation and dodging the tax system. The new game will be released for the Spectrum and Amstrad early next year.

## CREATE YOUR OWN ARCADE GAME

**Argus Press Software** are about to release the first in their 'Creator' series. *Arcade Creator* allows the user to design arcade games, with all the trimmings, without any machine code or BASIC knowledge. All of the commands are either in plain English or via a menu. Sounds too good to be true. The cost of this key to fame and fortune, just £14.95.

## SILICON DREAMS

Adventure fans can start sharpening their pencils and rumaging for their notebooks. **Level 9** are about to strike again. The final part of the Silicon Dream Trilogy titled *The Worm in Paradise* is to be released for your enjoyment and frustration. The new game has been described as a political science fiction humourous adventure, known by the experts as PSFHA. Following on from *Snowball* and *Return to Eden*, something has gone wrong with the future and you must put it right. The scene is set in a political SF environment, replete with amusement arcades and 'easy entertainment' in the clubs. Everything is privatised, right down to the 'organ banks' and police force, and there seems to be a feeling that Philip K Dick may have had a hand in inspiring the background. There are 240 graphics in the adventure, of which this compilation is just 100.



## ENSURE YOUR REGULAR COPY OF AMTIX!

When a magazine is rising in circulation (being new, AMTIX! is doing this) and so sells out immediately, you may experience difficulty in obtaining your copy every month. So the best thing to do is place a regular order with your local newsagent, which you can do by handing him this form.

**Please place me a regular monthly order for *AMTIX!* Magazine.**

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### To the Newsagent:

**AMTIX!** Magazine is published in the middle of every month by **Newsfield Ltd**, 1-2 King Street, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1AQ. **Tel: 0584 5851**, and distributed to the newstrade by **COMAG (08954 44055)**. Please check with the publishers if you have any difficulties in obtaining supply.

# NEWS

## AMSTRAD SHOW MIX UP

We very nearly had an Amstrad user show for each Amstrad model this year. The original show, which was being put on by the Rushworth Dales group of companies, collapsed when the group went into liquidation. The directors of the group were so concerned that the show should go on that they managed to buy up that part of the group which was putting it on. However, during the wheeling and dealing there was a brief period of panic, so Database Publications stepped in and took over. This caused something of a mix up because by the time Edition Scheme Ltd, the ex Rushworth Dales bit, had got its act together, the original site had been booked by Database. Angry but not unbowed, Edition Scheme booked the Tech West centre. They intended to go on with their show on the same day as the Novetel one. This rather bizarre situation caused more than a little confusion, especially when the adverts appeared for both events in issue 38 of *Popular Computer Weekly*. The big question on all of the exhibitors' lips was '..and which Amstrad show will you be going to this year?'. Eventually Edition Scheme decided to pull out. If you paid over any loot for a stand, as the exhibition did not take place, you are entitled to you money back. According to a spokesperson for Edition Scheme Ltd, the money was paid to a fund held by the liquidators, Leonard Curtis & Co, and they are the people paying out. You can get hold of them on **01 262 7700**, contact Peter Dunn.

## DK'TRONICS STIRS NEW MEMORIES

DK'tronics started producing hardware goodies for Sinclair computers many moons ago. When the Amstrad 464 was launched they made no secret of their intention to embrace the machine whole heartedly and become the leading independent manufacturer of Amstrad Hardware. The revelations at the Amstrad User show can have left little doubt that they may now have reached that status.

So far DK'tronics have launched a lightpen-based graphics pack and a voice synthesiser. Both products represented a high level of sophistication and very good value for money. The voice synthesiser, in particular, was admired by Amstrad. Understandably DK'tronics are very keen to keep quite about the new range, until each product is launched and available. So, although we know what's in store for your hungry computers during the remainder of the year, we thought we would confine ourselves to the first three.

## JOBS ON, RATHER THAN IN, COMPUTERS

The **Reed Employment Agency**, a rather large organisation having some 75 branches up and down the land, are going to advertise 50 positions per week via the Micronet Jobsearch pages. Reed are confident that they will be able to attract more potential recruits by using this electronic medium as well as provide a better service for their clients. Micronet also hope to open a junior section to the Jobsearch index offering help to those who are hovering about on either side of the last term of school. If you have never sneaked a look at the index then rest assured — it offers a lot more than just jobs as travel agents.

## GOOD VALUE TIME

If you missed out on a few games goodies from the recent past, fear not. Another new market label is to appear called **Hitsville**. That's the name appearing on a new compilation of games from **Ocean**, **US Gold**, **Ultimate** and **Software Projects** games. The package is to be titled *They Sold A Million*, a name selected more for its figurative effect than its figurative accuracy. The package features four games on two cassettes, *Daley Thompson's Decathlon*, *Beach Head*, *Jet Set Willy* and *Sabre Wulf*. The compilation costs £9.95 and you should be able to pick up a copy from the 1st of November.

## STATISTICS TIME

**Mintel Publications**, the market research people have come up with some interesting figures for the future of home computer and video console games.

Video consoles and games made about £25 million last year, about half their 1982 sales peak, and this year the figure will only be about £16 million according to the Mintel forecasters. However, it's a different story for the home computer games market, valued at around £100 million. In 1980 about a million units were sold and by the end of this year, Mintel estimates another seventeen million units will sell. Even so, they expect the phenomenal market growth witnessed to date will reach a peak before long. The outlook suggests fewer software companies which implies market stability.

On the hardware front, the prediction is that more people will buy disk drives and bigger machines to cope with new software. Apparently, wide audiences are expected for the games and entertainment programs, due to the rise in unemployment.

So there you are, it's all in black and white. And if you want the full report, *Leisure Intelligence, Video and Computer Games* is available from Mintel Publications at the mere snip price of £125 a single issue, or you could subscribe for £420 per annum . . . . .

## MPs ON THE NET

If you have an opinion on the 'Copywrite Protection Bill' and are frustrated because you don't know where to stick it, then Micronet have come to your aid. On Tuesday the October 29 the venerable **William Powell MP** will be appearing on Chatline, the service which lets you chat, briefly and in slow motion, to a selected victim. This particular victim is the gentleman who sponsored the private member's bill on software protection which became Law on Monday the 16th of September. So, if you want to find out if you have, or are, about to break the law then perhaps you had better log on.

## MICRO POWER MAKE FOR POWERFUL MICRO

Never Standing still long enough to catch a cold, Micro Power the ROM firm have released another piece of software with legs. The latest gizmo is called *Programmers Toolbox and Basic Extensions*. This particular ROM is only available for the 464. The ROM has an impressive range of commands, take **I COMPACT** which removes all REM statements. Or how about **I PICTURE**, used to create a picture on the screen. If you want to send TRACE to the printer then **I LTRON** will do just that. For £39.95 this might be just the thing for programmers in need of help, we'll have a PEEK at it next month.

## KOMING UP KUMA

Kuma really are prolific producers of software titles, do they ever take a holiday? Their next release is called *Argo Navis*. This is a multi-level game combining elements of tactical platform games with high speed arcade action. The game puts the player on board an alien-infested space cruiser. Your task is to recover 12 crystals, plant them in the correct sequence and then make you escape so you can watch from a safe distance as the ship and aliens, are rendered asunder. This latest Kuma title is due for release early October and will cost a mere £6.95, something of an alien price these days.

## FORTHCOMING COMPILERS

The Christmas season and compilation season really do seem to be one and the same thing. **Beau-Jolly** are planning to release compilation tapes that will be advertised on TV from now until January. The Amstrad version is called *Computer Hits 10*. The range of titles offered include arcade, adventure, sport simulation and strategy games. At a cost of only £9.95, Beau-Jolly are confident that their compilation pack will be 'the main man', so to speak. Since they intend to spend £250,000 advertising the thing they had better be right.



## LIFE IN THE 464 YET

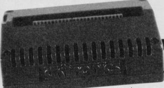
If you happen to be an Amster with a 464 or 664 and suffer an inferiority complex every time you meet a 6128 owner, then fret no longer. The first of the DK'tronics products is aimed to add an extra 64K of bank switched memory to your trusty beast. Well, there is a catch — the unit works on a 6128 as well so the 6128 people could stay 64K ahead. That is unless you decide to opt for the second product — a 256K bank memory extension pack.

Both memory packs are addressed in exactly the same way as the extra 64K on the new Amstrad 6128, as output ports. You can either access the block by using machine calls or by loading and using the BASIC RSX calls provided with each unit. Since Dk'tronics' bank switching software was written after Amstrad's version, DK have been able to improve on it. The memory upgrades mean that a 464 and 664 will be compatible with the 6128, in terms of memory at least. This means that users are no longer restricted by the size of the CP/M packages that they can run, now they can also benefit from the advantages of a 61K TPA. The snag is that you have to buy a copy of CP/M 3.0 which knows how to handle the extra memory.

Both the 464 and 664 units come in the standard DK'tronics add-on unit which housed the voice synthesiser. A new low profile case has been designed for the 6128 so you won't ruin its handsome looks. The price of the 64 unit is **£49.95** and **£99.95** for the 256K RAM pack.

The third of the new products is potentially the most exciting. Instead of having a 256K add-on RAM pack you could connect the new DK'tronics **Silicon Disk**. A re-written version of Amsdos is supplied on ROM, designed so that the new 'disk' acts in exactly the same way as a floppy disk drive, except that it offers an extra 70K. If you already have a disk drive then the unit acts as the B drive. For the really greedy who own two drives the silicon disk can be addressed as drive C. The only disadvantage with a silicon drive is that you can't take anything out and put it in your pocket, unless you transfer it to a floppy drive first. However, the major gain is the great increase in speed. You could, for example PIP all of your CP/M utility files AND sundry applications, such as *Wordstar*, onto the silicon disk and then use the floppy for keeping the output files. Unless there is a power loss, the data in the drive is quite safe, it will even survive a re-set. In the unlikely event of your not being satisfied with a 256K silicon disk then you can add another unit to bring it up to 512K, though I really can't imagine what you are going to put on it. The price of the second (or third) drive is **£99.95**.

In next month's issue we hope to bring you a hands-on review of these new products, and news of what else DK'tronics have got tucked away up their very baggy sleeves.



## SEE YOU IN THE ARENA MATE!

The game that all the battle hungry hacks have been waiting for is about to be unleased. **Lothlorien**'s new strategy game *Arena* is set in the later half of the 21st Century. By this time the nations have got their act together and decided that war was a little over the top. Instead they would settle their disputes using the medieval system of champions. There are a few changes from the charger and and lance. The future day champion has something akin to a tank, and a host of slave tanks. The Arena is vast, a whole battlefield in fact. There will be lots to keep you busy, like tracking the enemey tanks, keeping count of your ammunition and making sure you get the better of the nasty guy. The price of mayhem? £9.95

## OUT OF TIMES TIMES

Following the launch of the new Amstrad 'Joyce' an article appeared in a rival publication, notably 'The Times'. Amongst the pages of their Tuesday computer section there was a piece written by Geof Wheelwright, the opening lines of which read; 'The home computer industry is borrowing from the business computer technology of two and three years ago **in a desperate attempt to rescue itself**. Alongside this offending piece was another article extolling the virtues of a new Apricot portable which, in a desperate attempt to gain popularity in the business market, uses . . . 128K of memory, CP/M and a Z80 processor. Guess who wrote the Basic? you got it in one — Locomotion.

## SPANISH SPEAKING COMPUTERS

*'Sinclair denies that it has any plans to launch the new Spectrum 128 in the UK before next year.'* Aha! does this mean that the beast is on sale in selected retail outlet and Sinclair just don't know it, or perhaps they are a little better informed than Amstrad are, about the location of their products? To be fair though it seems a little unlikely that the 128 Spectrum will appear within the UK. Primarily because the machine is a joint development between Sinclair and Investronica, the Sinclair distributors. Anyway who wants a Spanish speaking Spectrum even if it has got 128K?


MINDSHADOW™

# HIGHWAY ENCOUNTER

**Vortex, £8.95 cass Author: Costa Panyi**
**Conversion: Mark Haigh-Hutchinson**




Vortex have released two other games prior to *Highway Encounter; Android One* and *Android 2*. All three games are by the same author. However for *Highway Encounter* Costa Panyi has used a very different technique that produces distinctive 3D graphics.

The game's plot is deceptively simple. A large collection of unpleasant aliens have invaded Earth. If their invasion plans are going to be successful they must secure a 'beach head' as a base for further expansion. The mother ship is the weak link, if that can be destroyed then their plans can be thwarted. Earth has but one device which can guarantee the destruction of the alien stronghold — the Lasertron. Before the Lasertron can be detonated it must be installed within the enemy camp where the enemy ship is positioned, at the end of a long, long road — zone zero.

At the start of the game your contingent, the Lasertron and five droids, are some 30 zones down the road. Your team forms up so that the main controllable droid takes the lead, followed by the Lasertron and the four remaining docile droids. The Lasertron has been programmed to move down the centre of the road, which it will keep on doing, followed by the spare droids until its progress is checked by an obstruction. While the Lasertron is indestructible, the spare droids are not; if enemy troops get behind the main droid they could carve up your reserve forces while you are otherwise engaged — as such, the spare droids are your spare lives.

To get your entourage across the thirty zones you must clear a path through the obstructions and enemy defences. The droid behaves rather like the doohickey in Ultimate's *Alien 8* in as much that when you instruct it to move forward it does so in the direction that it is facing, so before moving off you must rotate the droid asteroids style until it faces the required direction of movement. However, when under pressure from the enemy it is all too easy to panic and watch helpless as your droid moves at great speed in ever decreasing circles. The obstructions, in the form of barrels and boxes, are a nuisance as they block the Lasertron's path, but they can be put to good use to get around the enemies defences.

The enemy have three basic means of attacking your droid. The first, the stationary mines, can only be avoided. The mobile mines move from side to side across the width of the road. While you can dodge these, the chances of getting the rest of your party through them are very remote. The best plan is to obstruct the mines by manoeuvring some of the barrels or boxes in such a way as to block their preset paths, effectively boxing them in or trapping them between a block and the side of the road. By far the quickest way of moving any of the objects is to shoot at them, but beware, some of the boxes can't cope with being blasted — they evaporate. As you approach zone zero you find that the mines become harder to deal with, not just because there are more of them but because the patterns of their movement become much more complicated. They can, for example, criss-cross the width of the road so you can easily collide with one while you are trying to block another.

To make the task even more trying, enemy soldier droids constantly harass you. These vary in design and in their general outlook on life. Some are quite happy just to meander about, if they chance upon you and blow you to bits then so much the better. Others, seemingly fairly harmless, have a nasty habbit of wandering past and then creeping up on you from behind. The only effective way to deal with enemy droids is to shoot them all, but while your droid's laser is devastating it can only fire in bursts of three bolts and then takes time to re-charge. Unless you are very careful you are going to land yourself in the awkward situation of being surrounded by nasty aliens, bent on doing you in, while the laser charges up again.

There is a time limit too, you must reach the enemy base before a bar chart under the main display vanishes. Above the time display is a power bar indicating the status of the laser's charge. Alongside the two bars your score and high scores are shown. The score depends not only on how far you have penetrated down the road but also how many of your party you managed to take with you. Getting lost should be the least of your problems but if you want to know in which zone you are, then the panel on the bottom left tells you. When you reach zone zero it's all over — or is it?

**Control keys:** O,P Left/Right; 1/Q accelerate/decelerate; Spc to fire.

## CRITICISM

**1** *Highway Encounter* **has been one of the best received games this year. The graphics are sharp, detailed and above all remarkably smooth. The task set is not too daunting, at least not to begin with. Each progressive zone is harder to crack than the last. The aliens become more numerous and just a bit nastier, the movements of the mobile mines become increasingly more complicated. I tried the tactic of leaving my crew behind in the hope that when I had cleared a path I could go back for them — I never made it. The game is utterly compelling. I most heartily recommend it**




**2** In my mind this was one of the Spectrum games of this year, the same has to be true for the Amstrad. The only problem with *Highway Encounter* is the lack of sound and perhaps just a little glitch with the speed; when more than four or five characters appear on the screen the game slows markedly. I really like it, however, it's very playable and graphically superb.

**3** *This is simply one of the best games I've played on the Amstrad ... brilliant graphics, addictive and objective gameplay make this a real winner. The compulsion to keep going back for 'just another go' is exceptionally high with its challenging qualities. It's a shame the graphics don't scroll, but I suppose that would be asking too much but as it is with the flick screen it is still very good. The sound could have been improved upon no end, as it stands there's just a 'poop' and a couple of rustles and nothing else. I'm not too sure how much lasting interest the game has, it's essentially a pattern game (once learned easily done again) but it certainly is addictive.*

**Presentation 83%**
Everything helps to make this an easy game to get into, not so simple to get out.

**Graphics 93%**
Some of the best 3D graphics to grace Straddles's glazed face.

**Sound 61%**
No tunes but spot FX well used.

**Playability 91%**
Once the asteroid style control is mastered the action becomes fun.

**Addictive qualities 90%**
30 screens of road should keep you going for quite a while — and it's the sort of game that makes you want to get better at it.

**Value for money 78%**
Standard price for a clever game and a polished piece of software.

**Overall 92%**
An excellent addition to the Amstrad's software range.

# DRAGONTORC OF AVALON

**Hewson Consultants. £7.95 cass**
**Author: Steve Turner**
**Conversion: Keith Prosser**

Many, many years ago there was a king called Bran. This king was the mightiest in the land and his realm stretched from shore to shore. Knowing that one day he would die, Bran summoned all the lords of lore to his side where he bade them to forge the Dragontorc of Avalon so that his weak son would be able to rule the land.

When Bran finally died the Dragontorc was given to his son but the lad was ineffective and unable to wield the power the torc granted to him. Soon he became a tyrant king, his mind governed by the mighty torc. The supreme lorelord saw how treacherous the king had become and called upon the other lorelords to bring him from the Orient the crystal of Antithought. Creeping into the King's bedroom, the Lorelords used the crystal of Antithought to help them steal the torc and as they were doing this, the king awoke and grasped the torc. A nearby warrior drew his blade and separated the hand of the king from his arm. Amidst the alarm the torc fell down. Having held the torc, the king's hand lit up the gloom and then crawled without its body from the room.

The Dragontorc could never be unmade but it was divided into five magic crowns and one was given to each of the five realms and the Lorelords swore that the torc must never again be made one.

Many years passed since the torc was split and peace prevailed in that time. Maroc, an apprentice lorelord, was one night sitting near a fire when a giddy sensation came over him. Travelling deep into a nearby forest, he came across a tree stump from which, it seemed, magic was emanating. Digging deep amoung the leaves, Maroc's hand struck metal, not cold metal but warm vibrating steel. Withdrawing his hand from the stump, he gazed upon the seal of Merlyn, last of the lorelords, guardian of the Dragon heir. Gazing deep into the emblem, a power passed through his shaking arm and he heard the voice of Merlyn. Maroc was told of the evil deeds of Morag Shapeshifter of the north and her quest to unite the five crowns to reforge the torc. The last words of Merlyn were, 'Seek the Leyrod'. Suddenly he slumped to the ground and, as he recovered, he wondered what lay before him.

*Dragontorc* is played in a totally 3D world. Each location is






different (there are over 200) and each one is drawn as a 3D 'room'. To play the game you must guide Maroc through the land and solve the various puzzles. To do this you must first collect spells and objects. As you progress by solving problems, your status as a lorelord goes up along with your percentage of game completed. There are eight levels each representing a certain area of England or Wales. Each of the levels has its own problems along with their own approaches to the puzzles. Solving a problem requires certain objects or spells and once one problem is solved quite often you are given an object or clue that helps to solve a further problem.

Manipulating objects is done using the joystick or keyboard — a panel at the base of the screen shows spells you have in your possession, and these may be scrolled for selection — just select the Servant spell (you are given this at the start of the game) and move the little sprite about to collect objects which may be stored by Maroc or to take objects from Maroc to be deposited elsewhere. While you are using this spell you do not have any control over the central character, who remains still, but turns to watch the action.

Each level is inhabited by various unpleasant creatures such as dwarves or demons. These can be destroyed and any objects they may be carrying taken by using the appropriate spell. Should any of the creatures, or anything they fire, touch you then your energy is drained. If it is all used up then Maroc is transported (minus objects) back to the start location of that level.

*Dragontorc* is unique because it uses a process called 'Sensory Animation'. What that refers to is that the way other characters/creatures in the game treat you depends on how you treat them. In particular the elves can be befriended by giving them gifts and they will give you objects in return. In fact you must become allies with the elves because they are necessary for the final assault on Morag's citadel.

**Control keys: A/Z Up/Down;** *oblique↑backlash* Left/Right; Spc to fire. The keys are also definable.

## CRITICISM

**1** **There are very few really good arcade adventures on the Amstrad besides** *Sorcery*, **its follow up and** *Dun Darach*. **So it was a pleasure to hear that a cult Spectrum arcade adventure had been converted for the Amstrad. And it's a very good conversion too, making full use of the Amstrad's graphics capabilities and getting rid of the infamous Spectrum colour clash. The many problems in the game make it excellent value for money because it could take you several months to complete it. The main drawback with** *Dragontorc* **is that it can take a while to get into. Controlling Maroc and selecting the spells is not easy at first but with a bit of practice changing to the servant and other spells becomes quite natural. The control system, in fact, is quite simple and changes can be done quickly because all the actions and movements needed to play the game are done using a joystick or just five keys. To date** *Dragontorc* **is one of the best arcade/adventures around and is certainly worth buying.**

**2** This is a really strange sort of game and one that didn't initially impress me when I first clapped eyes on it. Once I'd sat down and actually started playing the game properly I really got into it and started to solve some of the rather ingenious little problems. The graphics may not strike you as being particularly super-doops (in fact sun shades could be recommended for those with sensitive eyes) but what really counts is the game, and there's a very good one hiding behind the rather gaudy exterior.

**3** *Steve Turner, the author of* Dragontorc *has been developing action 3D games for a long time (on the Spectrum), but with* Avalon, *to which this is a follow up, he moved into the realms of adventure with great success. Both games come nearest yet to a text-style adventure that does not require text input and is played exclusively with joystick-driven graphics. The result is clever, compelling and addictive. You do have to be pretty nifty with a joystick in tight situations when beset by dangers, but Maroc is moved easily enough, and the 3D, whether indoors or out, works in your favour. I think the Amstrad version is a touch over-colourful compared to its Spectrum counterpart, but this hardly detracts from the brilliant ingenuity of the story.* Dragontorc *is going to keep you awake at nights — so be warned. . . .*

**Presentation 89%**
Comes complete with detailed instructions and in a nice box. Options for selecting keyboard or joystick.

**Graphics 91%**
Colourful, detailed 3D graphics.

**Sound 73%**
Nice tune at the beginning of the game but other than that it is restricted to spot FX.

**Playability 85%**
A bit hard to get into but it is fun just mapping the game.

**Addictive Qualities 92%**
If you can get past the initial frustration then you should be hooked for quite a while.

**Value for Money 93%**
Plenty there to get your teeth into and £7.95 is below the average game price.

**Overall 91%**
A wonderful game with plenty of things to do. Could keep you up into the early hours of the morning just trying to solve ONE more puzzle.

# STARION

**Melbourne House, £9.95 cass**
**Author: David Webb**

*Starion*, very successful in an earlier life as a Spectrum game, has reached the Amstrad. Beating Firebird's expected conversion of *Elite*, *Starion* offers *Elite*-style vector graphics at a very fast pace.

The game is named after you and 'you' are a star pupil just graduated from the Space Academy. Bright young thing that you are, the government has selected you to perform a mission of utmost skill and daring. Evil aliens have been discovered using space/time travel and who are using it to create havoc in the space/time continuum. To retaliate, mankind has laboured long and hard to discover the secrets of time travel. Now the scientists have succeeded and your mission is to pilot a prototype space/timeship back to the beginning of time to correct the nastiness that's been done.

Despite several interesting theories by Einstein and Planck, Melbourne House tell us that space time is made up from 3 time blocks each split into a 3x3 array of time grids. Time grids are then again split into 3x3 arrays of time zones. There are 243 time zones and these are the units of time you travel in.

The aliens created havoc through temporal theft. Each time zone has been badly scrambled by the illegal removal of historically important items from their correct zone to one of the neighbouring eight zones. The object is to enter a zone and liberate the cargoes of any alien ships you find in the zone by destroying the ships. The cargo is a letter and all the letters together will form an anagram. Once a ship has been destroyed, collecting the alien's cargo is quite easy, you have to fly through the middle of the letter now drifting in space.

The anagrams, when correctly resorted, form the name of the stolen object. To replace it, you must correctly select the real time from which it came from a list of possible dates and clues. Solve all nine anagrams and you are given a grid code to allow access to the next time grid, where once again the process of alien zapping and letter collecting starts over.

When engaged in space combat you are given a 3D view through the cockpit window. At the bottom of the screen is the instrument panel constantly feeding back vital information. To track the alien ships there are two scanners showing plan and side elevation of your ship with the enemy marked as dots. The scanner is comprehensive also showing incoming fire and surrounding space debris. Pitch, yaw, dive and climb is the extent of control you have for manoeuvring plus fire for laser control. If you wish to use a gunsight one is provided. Via the keyboard, a thrust control is provided.

The amount of ships (lives) left is displayed in the bottom right hand corner and one is lost every time the hull temperature reaches the top of the meter. If an enemy missile strikes true then the hull temperature increases, and firing the ship's laser hots things up a bit too.

A facility to save and load to tape is included, accessed through a menu that appears every time you finish a zone.

**Control keys**: definable.




## CRITICISM

**1** ***Starion* on the Amstrad certainly is wonderful. The vector graphics are just amazing and are the best I've seen to date. I have to agree with the cassette inlay's cocky boast that *Starion* utilises 'the most advanced vector graphics system ever developed for a home computer'. Usually with technically brilliant games like this the gameplay side suffers quite drastically but I'm glad to say that *Starion* breaks the mould. The anagrams really are good brain teasers and placing the solutions in the correct time zones can be the cause of many forrays into the family encyclopedia.** *Starion* is a star piece and I'm sure it's destined to take pride of place in many an Amstrad owners software library.

**2** It's nice to come across a game that manages so excellently to combine arcade action with mind action, and make each as important and interesting as the other. *Starion* graphics have to be seen to be believed, fast, smooth and convincingly 3D. On first playing, the arcade action seems a bit daunting, but the 3D space in which you are playing is thoughtfully programmed, so it doesn't take too long to find something to shoot at. The anagrams can give pause for much thought, and some of

COMPUTER REPORT:
TIME WARP

PLEASE SELECT
TIME ZONE:

KEY:
-PROBLEM
-SOLVED

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| AD: 1858 | AD: 1905 | AD: 1985 |
| AD: 1980 | AD: 1693 | AD: 1897 |
| AD: 1957 | AD: 1831 | AD: 1968 |






them are positively mean. I might have worried whether the pause in the action caused by puzzle solving would ruin the feel of the game, but in fact that's the one moment when other members of the family can't resist joining in! Melbourne House have a winner here.

3 *There seem to be quite a lot of puzzle type games around at the moment, but Starion is the most polished I've seen, and the one that's the most fun to play. The shoot em up sequences are every bit as good as in any game of the type available, and the graphics are exceptionally fine. There isn't quite as much 'navigating' to be done as say in a game like Elite (which we should be seeing out soon), but then, a large part of Starion's fascination lies in the solving of the anagrams and that ever popular pasttime, proving how good your general historical knowledge is. In most respects, this is a very worthy addition to anyone's software library.*

**Presentation 83%**
Good packaging and instructions, several options, pity the definable key option is a bit unfriendly.

**Graphics 96%**
Fastest, flicker-free vector graphics yet on the Amstrad.

**Sound 71%**
Nothing super-impressive, but above average general and spot FX.

**Playability 89%**
Easy to fly the ship and the way arcade and mind work blends together makes for plenty of fun.

**Addictive qualities 87%**
Constant challenge provided by 243 time zones and increasing shoot em up difficulty

**Value for money 82%**
A fine game, but just a touch expensive, though compared to Amsoft prices, it's a bargain.

**Overall 92%**
A really slick and enjoyable game.

# BOULDERDASH

**Mirrorsoft, £9.95 cass**
**Author: Dalali Software Ltd.**

About two years ago Peter Liepe wrote *Boulderdash* on the Atari 800 for First Star. It received such acclaim that First Star soon released it for the Commodore 64 thus creating the legend of the *Boulderdash* conversions. Now through a licence deal with Mirrorsoft, *Boulderdash* has finally wended its way onto the Amstrad after gracing the innards of many other micros.

The scenario is relatively simple. Playing Rockford (a sort of cute stick insect and the margin hero of ZZAP! 64 magazine), you have to make your way through sixteen caves. In each cave you need to collect a certain quantity of jewels in a set amount of time. The number of jewels and time allowed vary for each cave and (surprise, surprise) things get harder the further you proceed.

There are 16 caves lettered A to P, you are allowed to start on screens A, E, I and M. The caves are made up from four basic building blocks; walls, earth, boulders and jewels. The walls define the boundaries of where you can move, surrounding the outer edge of the cave, and they also form barriers within the cave. The earth holds just about everything in place and may be eaten away by moving over it, you have to be careful though since earth usually supports boulders. Even though you can move in all four directions the boulders are lumbered with the laws of gravity. Eating away a section of earth holding a boulder isn't that deadly. You can just stay there with boulder teetering on your head indefinitely. Move away and the boulder falls into the space you've left. Try going downwards with a boulder above you and it's likely you'll be minus a Rockford and less a life. The dumb boulders, mindlessly obeying the laws of gravity, will squish you pixel thin if you let them. Boulders have their own brand of physics to which they adhere. A single boulder may not sit on top of another single boulder as it will fall off. A single boulder may sit on top of a single piece of earth as it's more supportive.

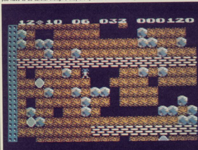
The jewels are there to be collected. In some caves the amount of jewels you need to get to the next cave aren't actually visible. After a quick spot of lateral thinking and a glimpse at the cassette inlay you soon find out that you have to destroy some of the cave's denizens.

The creatures you meet in the caves are Butterflies, Fireflies and Amoebas. Fireflies move anti-clockwise around the spare space in the later caves. Their touch is fatal though they're not immune to having the odd boulder dropped on them. If they are splatted the surrounding 9 squares are blasted away into nothingness. Butterflies are similar creatures though they move clockwise. If you splat one of these then 9 jewels appear in its stead. The amoeba is a strange beast, constantly expanding. This green and orange blob starts life only one square in size but continually expands until it reaches a certain body volume, when it suddenly transform into megatons of boulders.

You play *Boulderdash* through a scrolling window covering nearly all of the screen but only displaying about a third of the overall cave area. When Rockford nears the edge of the screen, more cave scenery scrolls into view. The screen moves about characterwise taking advantage of the Amstrad's own built in hardware scroll. All the usual one or two player options are packed in and the use of keys is also allowed.

Also, following the latest trend of back to back software, Atari Boulderdash, grandaddy of them all, has been included on the B side.

**Control keys:** Z,X left/right; *semi-colon/oblique* up/down and SHIFT for fire.




## CRITICISM

**1** **Being somewhat of a *Boulderdash* veteran and having played and loved it on the Atari, Commodore, MSX and Spectrum, I was pleased to see a version for Straddles. I must admit after seeing the Spectrum's screen constipate when trying to scroll smoothly on its version of *Boulderdash*, I had my reservations as to how well it could be done on the Amstrad. Though the screen scrolls about in character jumps, it's still very effective because of the sheer speed of movement. This has to be the fastest version to date. Also the graphics have been slightly improved on, making other versions seem dull and lack-**



lustre. Though in porky pixel mode (mode 0), the use of colours make the screen display seem detailed and interesting. A vast improvement on the majority of games using Mode 0. The gameplay elements that made the other versions so addictive are all present. With the extra speed, Amstrad *Boulderdash* plays in a remarkably similar way to the Atari version. All in all still one of most original and frustratingly addictive games to date, the Amstrad version being best effort graphically yet. I just look forward to *Boulderdash II (Rockford's Riot).*

**2** The graphics on this version are certainly interesting but I'm not sure whether they are that much of an improvement over the original. The scrolling put me off a bit as well. Even so, the game is a worthy successor to previous versions and Amstrad owners should be pleased that they have access to a remarkable game. This is money well spent.

**3** *I wasn't too impressed when I first started playing. There seemed to be something missing. Little details like the title screen weren't quite up to the standard of the Commodore or Atari versions. Having played it for quite a bit now, my prejudice has died and I now believe it deserves the same success as its predecessors. The scrolling still annoys me somewhat but other details are just different rather than inferior. Everybody should like this game — it's incredibly addictive, highly colourful and, on the whole, excellently animated. Rockford looks at home on the Amstrad.*

**Presentation 80%**
Very good looking indeed with a reasonable range of options.

**Graphics 79%**
Chunky though effective, making good use of porky pixel mode.

**Sound 59%**
Unimpressive though fairly effective.

**Playability 93%**
Great fun from the very start, though a good squint at the inlay is advised.

**Addictive qualities 91%**
Extremely addictive with very high frustration factor...

**Value for money 78%**
A mite overpriced at £9.95.

**Overall 89%**
Definitely worth a place in any self respecting Amstrad owner's tape library.

# THE COMPLETE GAMES INDEX

**Amstrad games software has, by now, had a fair time to develop. Much of the earlier material consists of conversions from Spectrum originals, and in turn, many of those were copies of arcade machine games. As is to be expected, a lot of it is dross, and Amstrad owners haven't, by and large, benefitted from the budget-priced software that has appeared for other machines which makes it a reasonable risk to buy ageing games.**

**Recently, however, the situation has improved, with far better conversions coming along, and some excellent Amstrad originals. The aim of The Complete Guide is to bring you up to date on games software through brief but to-the-point mini-reviews, helping point a way through the minefield that hides both excellence and rubbish in the hype.**

**We asked ROBIN CANDY to play his way through — well, an awful lot of games and give his opinions. As there are too many games to fit into one issue, The Complete Guide will continue next month.**

**The games are not in any particular order throughout the issue, making categories gets harder as more complex games appear, but there is an index,on page 7 to help you find them and a key to suggest the type of game. Each game has been given an AMTIX! Overall rating based on what it would receive if it were to be fully reviewed at this time.**

## LASERWARP

*AMSOFT*
*£8.95 cass*

*Laserwarp* is a conversion of what was originally a boring game anyway. You have control of a little laser cannon with which you must destroy the master and his minions. There are 10 waves of aliens to fight your way through in a game similar to 'Galaxians' and 'Phoenix'. On the final wave you get a chance to destroy the master. To kill him you must get a shot through the forcefield that protects him and while you are trying to do this hordes of aliens rain from above in a bid to destroy you.

It may be a reasonable game to play but once completed then it is unlikely that you will return to it again. The graphics are reasonable but the sound is pathetic. Not a bad 'Galaxian' type game but it doesn't have any lasting appeal.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 43%**

## FOOTBALL MANAGER

*ADDICTIVE GAMES*
*£7.95 cass*

*Football Manager* is in the same vein as *Software Star*, also by Addictive. It's also one of the most venerable home computer programs, having first originated on the Sinclair ZX 81 computer. You must manage your football team from division 4 to the top of division 1, and hopefully to winning the FA cup.

On starting the game you are asked for your name and the team you wish to manage. From then on it is very similar to *Software Star* you must buy/sell players, Obtain/pay off loans etc.

*Football Manager* is much more addictive, however, and it is a lot easier to get into. Much of the game is text input, but during matches there are graphic highlights showing the goals, these are very poor, using matchstick men kicking a pixel around. Generally quite a good game but very dated now and it's doubtful whether there will be much lasting interest in it.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 59%**

Airwolf

## AIRWOLF

*AMSOFT/ELITE*
*£8.95 cass*

The former Vietnam hero, Stringfellow Hawke, is the only man capable of flying the billion dollar helicopter, Airwolf. Piloting Airwolf you must go on your most dangerous mission yet; to rescue 5 top US scientists who are being held hostage in an subterranean base beneath the scorching Arizona desert.

To achieve this you must descend into the the underworld and destroy the strategically placed defence boxes. Avoiding the various hazards you must then pilot your Helicopter to the centre of the base and rescue the scientists.

*Airwolf* is not an easy game to play. It takes a while before you can get used to flying the helicopter and that is before you even start to play the game properly! The graphics are quite good though not overly impressive but the sound is effective. *Airwolf* turns out to be playable and quite addictive but little more than a shoot em up. Nevertheless, as such it is an enjoyable one that will appeal to fans of this type of game.



**Overall AMTIX! rating: 79%**

# NONTERRAQUEOUS

**Mastertronic, £1.99 cass**

After Mastertronic's proliferation of cheap software for other micros they've now foccused attention on the Amstrad to release *Nonterraqueous*. The tongue-straining title is merely a description of the droid you control, it means not of air and not water.

The scenario features an evil computer enjoying a reign of terror over a whole planet's population. Regarding people as trivial, the computer uses them, to quote the inlay, 'as pawns in a universal chess game'. The citizens, understandably a bit miffed, decide to take some action. After months of carefully planned pilfering from an assembly line in an android factory, the humans have managed to amass enough spare parts to make up a droid named Seeker. The plan is to use Seeker to destroy the computer as an inside job.

The computer is megalithically large and housed within a mountain. The computer complex sprawls over 42 levels split into three sections, the cave, machinery and semi-machinery levels. Each floor has a multitude of rooms and the total location count tots just over 1000!

The game takes an arcade adventure format requiring certain objects to be collected before major steps toward your final objective can be taken. An example is the route you need to pass through the gasroom. The only way to do it is in style – fly, and for that you need the rocket but the rocket needs fuel that you have to collect – and so on. Useful objects lying around are bombs – handy for destroying force fields.

The droid is controllable in two different modes; sphere and defencless. When starting you're in defencless mode and, as the name suggests, you have no way of repelling attackers but you have the extra advantage of speed. In sphere mode you are supplied with a laser cannon giving a good impression of the streams of laser used in 'Defender'. To change modes you need to find a room with a terminal in it labelled 'Swap'. Hitting the pick up key toggles the mode change.

Positioned around the base are the computer's defenders that spew white noise at you. These sap your psyche, if it reaches 0 then you'll lose a life. Also milling around are fish like creatures that merely get in your way and hinder progress. Some rooms contain photon thrusters pulsing energy in vertical streams across the width of the room. Flying into one of these means certain death.

The screens flick to and fro in the normal arcade adventure format using graphically similar screens to save on memory. Control is via joystick or keys though if you pick joystick you'll still be forced to make the odd key depression.

**Control keys:** Q/A up/down; O/P left/right; Spc to fire; I pick up/psyche/swap; U drop bomb

Ploughing through a thousand plus screens in NONTERRAQUEOUS, that's you at the top right, heading for some meanies.

## CRITICISM

**1** *Nonterraqueous* **shows amazing scope and complexity for budget software. In fact it's all a bit awesome at first and makes getting started a trifle hard. The graphics are above average and the combination of graphic elements to make 1000 screens is very clever as they aren't as repetitive as one would expect. The movement is slightly crude and not altogether flicker free, however. Things tend to slow down a bit if you unleash a spray of laserfire or if there are more than a few sprites in the room. Once you get into things the gameplay elements really are quite reasonable presenting respectably hard yet logical problems. Overall a lot more than I'd expect to receive for just under two quid and this puts the majority of Amsoft's £8.95 range to shame.**

**2** They have finally brought the unpronounceable budget game to the Amstrad. This is one of those games you don't know whether to like or not. It has great graphics and very good sound with a continuous tune, but there's just something about the game itself that is a little bit monotonous. I think it would help if your man moved around the screen with a little more zip. I can't really see the point of having two different Seekers when they can both do the same things (other than fire) and go into the same places. Generally, I wouldn't buy this game, but for £1.99 how can you fail?.

**3** *If you like absolutely immense, mega arcade adventures then this is really the one for you. There are plenty of puzzles to solve and lots to map (but only if you're a cartographer with huge paper resources)! The only trouble with this type of game is that because of its size it may become frustrating, since the rewards of solving puzzles are rather few and far between. The graphics aren't too bad but I'm glad that there's a volume switch at the back of the computer — the sound is abysmal. At £1.99 it's excellent value for money, but even at its incredibly low price I'd recommend a look before purchase, it might not be everyone's cup of tea.*

**Presentation 71%**
Standard packaging, good cover, not many frills or options.

**Graphics 82%**
Excellent, imaginative appearance, though repetition of elements may pall.

**Playability 76%**
Easy to start, but a bit daunting at first.

**Sound 48%**
Continuous tune, generally a bit tacky.

**Addictive qualities 78%**
1000 rooms should keep you busy, but the rewards are stretched over the game.

**Value for money 90%**
A snip at two quid.

**Overall 81%**
A game that, at its price, puts many to shame.

# JUGGERNAUT

**CRL, £8.95 cass**
**Author: Pete Cook**

If you are something of a simulator fan, but have reached the conclusion that there must be more to life than flying F-16s, driving racing cars and managing football teams, then perhaps you might fancy taking a leaf out of Princess Anne's book and take up . . . truck driving. That's exactly what this latest release from CRL allows you to do, except that instead of moving eventing horses around the shires you will be dealing with more mundane cargoes; timber, coal, oil and food.

On loading you are presented with five icons that allow you to either; start the game, select one of four lorry sizes, practise your driving, redefine the keys or have a look at the high score table. Driving a larger lorry means that although you will be able to carry a heavier load, and so complete some jobs quicker, you may find yourself struggling to control it. The practice mode is always worth a visit. You can have a go at tackling some of the more difficult tasks like parking or negotiating roundabouts.

The controls are pretty straightforward. The panel at the top of the screen has a large steering wheel, you can judge the orientation of the wheel by looking at the line across its centre. As you enter the instruction for left, the wheel rotates left until it reaches full lock. If the truck is moving forward then, from above, you see the cab begin to turn with its trailer following on behind. There is a knack to this steering bit; you

Mind the hedgehog, you roadhog! Super loading screen from CRL.




JUGGERNAUT's map screen, showing the collection icons at the bottom left.

## TECHNICIAN TED

*HEWSON CONSULTANTS*
*£7.95 cass*

*Technician Ted*, the enthusiastic young hacker, bounces to work at 8.30 am. Anxious to please the Big Boss he knows that he must complete 21 tasks by clocking off time at 5.00 pm. The only problem is that poor old Ted doesn't know what the tasks are, let alone where to find them. Thankfully a friend (who also works at the factory) has given him a rough sketch of the rooms near the canteen and a piece of advice; the first place you must visit is your desk then, go to the Silicon Slice Store. In each room you must touch the two flashing objects but in the right order.

*Technician Ted* is one of the best platform games around; though it is not totally original, it has some added features that make it stand out from the rest. The graphics are the same as those featured in the Spectrum original but the colours have been improved. Probably the worst feature of this game is that it's rather difficult to get anywhere but, coupled with the fact that it is also addictive to play, most people should find it a very good buy unless you hate platform games.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 85%**




## CENTRE COURT

*AMSOFT/EPICSOFT*
*£8.95 cass*

*Centre Court*, as the name suggest, is a lawn tennis simulation. All the normal rules of tennis apply.

Playing the game is remarkably easy and it takes only a few goes to become confident in controlling your character reasonably well. During rallies your position relative to the ball when you strike it depends on the stroke you play, whether it is high, low, slow or fast.

*Centre Court* doesn't actually play particularly well. The graphics are reasonable but they move badly and flicker and the sound is very limited. It doesn't take long to learn the movements but the game soon becomes very boring due to being a bit slow. Overall it is a brave attempt at a tennis simulation which unfortunately has come off none too well.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 49%**



## ROLAND IN SPACE

*AMSOFT/INDESCOMP*
*£8.95 cass*

After your success in *Roland in Time* you are now faced with the daunting task of building a super weapon to defeat the evil Maetro.

To do this you must journey through space to each of the seven planets, where you must find and retrieve the 158 parts of the galaxy's most feared weapon, the Arturan Random Nuclear Obnoxious Lifeform Desynchroniser, which of course spells out A.R.N.O.L.D. Each planet is full of creatures and objects left by Maetro to hinder your progress and avoiding contact with these is vital since your regeneration tanks only work 9 times.

As with some of the other Roland games the graphics are acceptable without being outstanding, but the scrolling is really poor. Once again, this very dated game is fun for a while but rapidly becomes boring.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 41%**

## ANDROID ONE

*VORTEX*
*£7.95 cass*

As an android you have been assigned the task of shutting down a nuclear reactor before it blows up and destroys life as we know it. To perform this task you must travel through 14 screens of pure hell to the nuclear reactor. Once you have accomplished your mission you must then travel all the way back to the starting screen before the time limit runs out.

*Android One* is an early type of 2D scrolling maze game. All the 14 screens are connected together horizontally and as you get near the end of one, the next screen scrolls into view. The various nasties who inhabit the maze (and are willing to eliminate you) can also follow you as you flick from screen to screen. Your opponents come in four different shapes and each one has its own characteristics.

*Android One* is a very simple looking game but playing it can prove tough and very frustrating. It's unlikely to appeal to many people now because of its age and it is just too frustrating to warrant long time interest.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 21%**





## CODENAME MAT

*AMSOFT*
*£8.95 cass*

This conversion of the classic Spectrum game is the nearest thing at present the Amstrad has to a true space traveller simulation like *Elite*. The Myon culture has decided to invade the Solar System and their ultimate goal is to destroy Earth and its people. As MAT you have been given the most advanced ship in the universe, the USS Centurion, with which it is your task to anhilate the Myons.

Your ship is equipped with many little gadgets like galactic charts, warp capabilities, photon type weapons and long/short range scanners. All your instruments play a vital role in the game and mastering them is of the upmost importance. There are 3 different types of Myon craft to destroy, ranging from the small but deadly fighter craft to the giant battle cruisers. The number of ships it is necessary to destroy depends on the starting level you choose, and where you start the game from.

If you like strategy/arcade games then you will love *Code Name Mat*. The 3D graphics are only average but the game can prove so addictive that it doesn't matter. Mastering the controls can take some time but that is half the fun. It is a good blend of the tactical type games and arcade shoot em up.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 74%**

## ASTRO ATTACK

*AMSOFT*
*£8.95 cass*

In *Astro Attack* it is your task to fight off the hordes of Rigonites before the time runs out. You are placed in the middle of a grid also on this grid are the enemy craft. On the easier levels these just move about trying to ram you off the grid but on later levels they get a lot nastier and start to shoot. When these ships are on the same line as you are, then you can blast them with your laser.

*Astro Attack* is a poor version of the now old-hat game 'Grid Runner'. The graphic quality and general feel is poor and off putting. It may prove addictive for a while but it doesn't take long before the game becomes boring. An aged, poorly implemented arcade copy with severely limited appeal.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 27%**

## GRAND PRIX RALLY 2

*AMSOFT*
*£8.95 cass*

This is essentially a 'Pole Position' variant. You have to race through several meteorological conditions such as deserts or snow.

One neat feature of the game is the option to create a track of your own which can then be saved to tape for future use. This allows you to define the type of terrain, the length of the track and various other details.

*Grand Prix Rally 2* is instantly playable but the graphics let it down tremendously. They look good at first but as soon as they start to scroll it all goes to pieces because the movement is so jerky. This game isn't very addictive and becomes a bore after a while and proves to be a poor alternative to 'Pole Position'. There's certainly room for a better version of this famous race game.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 47%**

## WORLD CUP

*ARTIC*
*£7.95 cass*

As the name suggests, *World Cup* is a football simulation. You decide how many people are to play the game and you can also choose what team you wish to take to the final. The playing area is a three screen-long green pitch which scrolls to follow the ball.

When playing the game you control the footballer nearest the ball. Should your opponent be in possession, then move your character into him and possession will be transferred to you. To shoot at the goal just get within a reasonable distance and press fire.

The best feature in *World Cup* is the ability to play two player games — this means that there is an infinite number of skill levels. With that said, the graphics and sound are a bit of a let down otherwise this would have been a very good program. This is the best football simulation on the Amstrad to date but there's still room for a lot of improvement, and no doubt some of the better conversions will be coming along soon.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 66%**

must learn when to begin a turn, how much to turn the wheel and when to start turning it back — you shouldn't be allowed out on the roads until you have mastered the art. In the early stages you may make a lot of use of the dial on the top right of the panel, the damage indicator. When you collide with something an alarming sound warns you and the needle on the damage dial creeps just a little nearer to the point where you can consider your rig as a write off. Fortunately the damage can be put right at a garage. Apart from the clock and the fuel gauge the panel also boasts a gear indicator, the fire button toggling between the three gears. And don't forget that the speed limit in a built up area is 30 mph — the speeding fines can soon mount up.

When you feel up to starting work you can begin the game and find out what your tasks are.

plan and marks the location of the depots that you will need to visit — all you have to do is to work out the least complicated route to them.

A number of trips between various depots is often necessary but at the end of the day you are marked for your efforts. If you complete the tasks set you get a handsome bonus depending on how many minutes of the day are left. Added to your bonus is a payment for the total tonnage of goods moved which should add up to rather a lot, just as well because there a a couple of deductions; if you damage the truck then that must be paid for, likewise the tyres. Any fines accumulated for over enthusiastic driving are also deducted, leaving your net earnings as a final score.

**Control keys:** A/Z accelerate/decelerate; O/P left/right; Spc to change gear S for main menu.

**Out on the road with your GII articulated lorry.**

There are a number of different towns with varying street plans but just before you set off a map will let you work out what's what. You are told how much of each of the goods must be collected and returned to your home depot. While the street plan is on the screen this is a good time to work out how you are going to leave the depot, after all if it's on a corner you might regret racing out at 40 mph. Once out of the depot the first task is to find a phone box, and park — near it rather than on it. Once parked press S and you are presented with the main menu. By selecting one of the five icons you can, return to the lorry, load up, unload, pause, resign and of course make a phone call. The girls in the office take a little while to answer the phone but once they have you can select from another set of icons which of the goods you are interested in collecting. A little cursor scans across the street

### CRITICISM

CRL must have taken Alan Sugar seriously when he said that '. . . the Amstrad was the truck drivers computer'. Initially this game appears to have all the appeal of a sore throat but very soon it really does become quite compelling. Once you have mastered the rig, and that's going to take a while, you can have quite a lot of fun finding your way about town in search of the depots and picking up the different goods. Some of the routes call for a great deal of skill, especially when you are trying to complete all of the tasks in time. The graphics and the panel display are nicely designed and worked well but not all of the lorry driving thrills are here; how about terrorising hairdressers in Fiat Pandas for example? This isn't a fast action game so its appeal will probably

**not be universal, but those who enjoy this sort of pace should get a lot of fun out of it.**

**2** I must say that I rather enjoy games that call on you to dash hither and thither along complicated streets. *Juggernaut* couldn't exactly be described as action-packed, but it is challenging and there's plenty to do to keep you busy for some time. I liked its novelty value — there aren't too many lorry driving simulations — and the use of icons speeds up the more drab proceedures usually associated with simulators. Graphics are of a reasonable standard without being astonishing, and the sound effects are neat (but the lorry sound can drone on a bit after a while). This game is clever and absorbing, and even manages to be addictive.

**3** *Making phone calls to find the pick up points, getting to them and, worst of all, reversing into the loading bay, makes* Juggernaut *into a really rather neat game. Keeping the truck on the road is quite absorbing but I can't help feeling there should be a bit more to it. The graphics are well above the usual standard for this sort of bird's eye view road game, with all the peripheral details adding to the general flavour (particularly like the hedgehog on the loading screen), although I agree with someone who said that the artic does occasionally look a bit like a disposable razor blade. Overall, an unusual game that combines some arcade skills with a trader/strategy game, and one that should present a reasonable challenge to most people.*

**Presentation 72%**
Icons add greatly to the overall effect, and there are plenty of options.

**Graphics 78%**
Good colour, well drawn and animated.

**Sound 72%**
Quite realistic, the phone sound is great.

**Playability 73%**
A neat and interesting game and if you can take the stress you should enjoy it.

**Addictive qualities 65%**
Compelling enough but not for ever.

**Value For Money 72%**
If you like the type, it's money fairly well spent.

**Overall 71%**
Excellently executed simulation, but probably has a narrow appeal.

## ALIEN 8

*ULTIMATE*
*£9.95 cass*

*Alien 8* is effectively the follow up to *Knight Lore*. Though it does not feature the curse of Sabreman or spells, it does have similar graphics (though altered to look like a spaceship where the action takes place) and the Filmation technique.

As the little Alien 8 type robot it is your mission to revive the cryonaughts before the spaceship you are in collides with a nearby planet. The cryonaughts are the last survivors of a highly advanced race on a voyage to another planet who have been frozen for the voyage. You must venture round the ship, avoiding the mutants and other nasties that have entered it, and revive the space travellers by placing the right type of cryogenic valves on the right plugs. When all the plugs and valves have been put together, the game ends.

Movement around the ship and manipulation of objects is almost the same as that featured in *Knight Lore*. The graphics are breath-takingly stunning and again Ultimate have improved on the Spectrum original by presenting the rooms in two colour combinations. The game is very good and extremely playable. Similarities to *Knight Lore* aside, it is still worth buying as it is a bigger game and so presents a tough challenge to all arcade freaks even if it can be a bit frustrating at times.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 92%**

Alien 8

## DARK STAR

*DESIGN DESIGN*
*£7.95 cass*

The galaxy is under the tyrannical rule of the Evil Lord. In your ship, the LIAR, you must try and free every thing from his evil domination. In many respects, except for the fact that its concept predates it, *Dark Star* resembles the arcade original 'Star Wars'.

The LIAR is a highly sophisticated ship. Its weaponry is of the fixed mount type which is aimed by manoeuvering the ship. The LIAR's battle computer generates a real time display that shows what is happening in your immediate vicinity. Enemy ships fire at you by prediction, should you keep the same course for too long.

There are 3 main parts to the game: Space, Hyperspace and Planets. In Space you fight enemy ships and navigate through the galaxy. Hyperspace – when you travel to the other side of the galaxy, you must fly through one of the sets of gates in a sector. You will then be flying down a rectangular tunnel – do not stray from this or you will lose some of your energy and could eventually die (after a while you will reach the end of the tunnel and be back in space). Planets – just fly 'into' a planet and you find yourself skimming it's surface. Here you must destroy the planet's bases to liberate it from the enemy.

Though not easy to control, *Dark Star* is very easy to get into and soon becomes addictive. The 3D vector graphics are only really above average but they are so fast that you don't see them on screen for long. One of the novelties of *Dark Star* is its famously humourous hall of fame which changes most times you load the game. A very high speed shoot em up, but not quite as good as their other release, *Tank Busters*.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 74%**

## ATOM SMASHER

*AMSOFT*
*£8.95 cass*

A nuclear reactor has got completely out of control and it is your mission to shut it down before it blows up. Both the reactor and core are situated in the middle of the screen with an electron circling them. Controlling a little triangular ship you must shoot a proton that circles the core and this produces another electron. Electrons are deadly if touched but they delay the countdown to the explosion. If you shoot the meltdown then this also delays the the end of the game. Once the meltdown has reached the core then the game ends.

*Atom Smasher* is an extremely frustrating game to play and this proves to be its downfall. The graphics and sound are dreadful leaving a lot to be desired. As games go *Atom Smasher* is a terrible waste of money and definitely should be avoided.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 17%**

## CHUCKIE EGG

*A & F SOFTWARE*
*£7.90 cass*

Yet another classic platform game that casts you in the role of Henhouse Harry, but it has some 236 more screens than *Manic Miner*. The idea behind the game is just to go around a screen and collect all the eggs while avoiding the various types of nasties that pursue you around the playing area.

Every screen is made up of two basic elements; platforms and ladders. Also dotted around the screens are occasional lifts. Collecting eggs gets you points and collecting the hen seed gets you a bonus. The biggest problem with *Chuckie Egg* is that it can soon become boring because of the similarities in the various screens. On the other hand, if you particularly enjoy platform games, then this one is almost frighteningly addictive and promotes a need to get higher and higher scores.

**Overall AMTIX! rating 69%**

## ROLAND AHOY

*AMSOFT*
*£8.95 cass*

As Roland the intrepid explorer on board your ship, it's your mission to collect treasure from the Golden Harbour and take it to the hidden cave at Treasure Cove. In order to do this you must first blow a hole in the boom which protects the harbour entrance and to do that you must go to Powder Quay to collect cannon balls. The ship may enter the harbour only when the hole in the boom is sufficiently large to allow its passage.

Each journey must take in the three locations shown on a map, the Powder Quay, the Golden Harbour and the Treasure Cove. Beware of the many dangers that lurk within the sea and in the locations — you only have four lives.

*Roland Ahoy* has simple and effective graphics but poor sound. Although quite enjoyable when you first play it, having visited all three locations, further playing reveals no extra challenges, and it is another rather dull Roland game.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 39%**

# FINDERS KEEPERS

**Mastertronic, £1.99 cass**
**Author: David Aubery Jones**




The King of Ibisima just doesn't know what sort of present to give his daughter Germintrude for her birthday. Instead of nipping down to the local Ibisima Woolies to scan the shelves for a suitable gift, he sends you, the Magic Knight, out on a quest to find a fitting gift. If you succeed you will become a Knight of the Polygon Table . . . if you don't then forget the thought of ever going back to the palace.

*Finders Keepers* first appeared on the Spectrum and was Mastertronic's first game (for that machine) of real quality. Its transfer to the CBM 64 was even more triumphant and proved the point that excellent budget software was here to stay. What of the Amstrad version?

You start the game with the King waving you to a transporter. Step on this, and you're magically transported to Spriteland, an alien-infested platform world packed with valuable items. The resident aliens sap your energy which is shown on screen in the form of a bar, if you're not careful and the energy reaches zero then you lose one of your five lives.

There are many objects scattered around the landscape which form an important part to this game. These all look the same, being little white triangles but if you stand on them and use the **examine** command then you are told what the object is. If you consider the object might play a useful part in the game you can pick it up, rather like a true adventure game.

You can *Finders Keepers* from two viewpoints. If you wish to comply with your King's wishes then you need to trade different objects until you have a prize fit for the Princess. If, however, you are willing to commit a bit of treason then you could always enter Spriteland as a free agent, working only for yourself. Once you've stacked up a reasonable horde you can leave the castle for a life of luxury.

*Finders Keeper* is an arcade adventure platform game featuring a wealth of screens. Though involving a lot of arcade elements, the adventure side of things is very similar to the traditional style of adventuring. To attain any status you have to trade objects at a profit. In some cases if you collect two objects they may interact, combining to leave you with an even more useful item. A philosopher's stone and a lump of lead, for instance, leaves you with a much more valuable lump of gold. Also, as in traditional adventures, there's a limit to how big your inventory may grow, the maximum amount of objects you can carry being five.

Around the game you come across traders willing to barter their wares. Using the traders it's possible to turn apparently useless objects into very useful ones by buying items that interact.

The screens mostly take a standard platform-type format involving pixel-precise jumps from ledge to ledge. If you do a bit of exploring it's likely you may find at least one of the two mazes in Spriteland. The mazes scroll around you keeping your knight central, a system reminiscent of that employed in *Boulderdash*.

The scoring system is in two parts displaying a percentage of how many rooms have been explored and the amount of




One of the platform screens from Mastertronic's little masterpiece FINDERS KEEPERS.

cash you're worth. The screen display shows how many lives you are left.

**Control keys:** Cursors for movement, G to get; T to trade; D to drop; E to examine.

## CRITICISM

**1** *Finders Keepers* **is a first rate piece of budget software. The standard of programming plus the interesting gameplay make this one a winner. It puts a lot of software houses to shame especially those who try to peddle their substandard wares around the £10 mark. The graphics are of a high quality with a good standard of movement, though the way Magic Knight jumps could have been better. Screen movement is smooth and unflickery. Very good as well with the variety in terrain with the maze and platform screens intermingling. Overall one of the best pieces of budget software to date and gives a timely reminder for other software houses to pull their socks up!**

**2** Mastertronic certainly seem to be really getting their act together. *Finders Keepers* is yet another first rate game and one that's bound to become a very successful piece of software. I loved the way part of the program was presented as a true platform game and the other part as a sort of 3D(ish) maze. There's plenty of things to do and some of the puzzles are excellently thought out. Nice one Mastertronic!!!

**3** *Its appearance on the Spectrum was something of a revelation, as at that time no one thought budget software could produce anything reasonable. But Mastertronic have improved the game even further with the Amstrad version. The arcade elements are well up to standard, requiring some skill and good timing. The adventuring and trading bits blend in perfectly, and it can take some time to work out how best to go about playing the game. Playable then, attractive to watch and strangely addictive.*

**Presentation 88%**
Nice loading screen and attractive packaging with reasonable options.

**Graphics 86%**
Extremely good use of Mode 0 showing imaginative use of colour.

**Sound 88%**
Pretty impressive and constant effects throughout the game.

**Playability 85%**
Immediately playable as a normal platform game – and then there's more.

**Addictive Qualities 88%**
Compelling adventure aspects should make for an interesting game.

**Value for Money 97%**
Absolutely outstanding, programs this good so inexpensive.

**Overall 91%**
A great game that should hold interest for a substantial amount of time. The price makes it irresistable.

# GAMES INDEX

## BEACH HEAD

*US GOLD/AMSOFT*
*£9.95 cass, £13.95 disk*

One of America's top selling games of last year has been converted to the Amstrad. Based on some American Pacific war you must establish a beach head on an island and overthrow the dictator.

There are six stages to the game. The first stage, the aerial reconnaissance, is a map screen. Here you must choose whether to opt for a hidden waterway to take the enemy fleet by surprise or whether to engage them in direct battle. Should you choose the the former then the screen will cut to the hidden passage. In this screen you must guide your 10 ships past mines avoiding torpedoes to the other side of the passage. Your success at this screen will determine how many ships you have in the next screen.

The third screen has you fighting off enemy fighters, there will be less fighters to destroy should you have originally chosen to go through the hidden passage. Once enough planes have been destroyed then the naval battle begins. To beat this screen you must destroy all of the enemy fleet. Each ship is at a different distance from your fleet. Once you have fired at a ship a readout will tell you how long or short your missile fell from the enemy, adjust the trajectory and the angle of the gun is raised accordingly. When you have sunk all of the ships you can manoeuvre your fleet into the harbour, this can only hold 4 ships so you are awarded bonus points for any extra ships. Each ship can hold 2 tanks, so you can have a maximum of 8 for the beach head. You must now guide your tanks through the Dictator's defences and to the fortress of Kuhn Lin. Your tanks constantly move forward at a steady pace but they can be manoeuvred from side to side. Success at this screen will determine your chances in the next — the final battle.

At Kuhn Lin you must land 10 hits on a fortress in order to destroy it. There are 10 possible targets but only one is vulnerable at a time, this one turns white, when you have hit the target another one will turn white. The fortress is guarded by a highly accurate gun; if this gets you in its sights then it will fire and as it never misses a large task force of tanks is needed to ensure victory.

*Beach Head* is rather primitive by most of today's standards. The graphics, while adequate, are not spectacular and we all know that the Amstrad is capable of much better things. The game is quite playable but there isn't much to it and it shouldn't take very long to complete. On the whole it isn't an awe inspiring game though younger gamers will find it enjoyable.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 57%**

## TEST MATCH CRICKET

*CRL*
*£6.95 cass*

*Test Match Cricket* is one of the better cricket simulations, and another conversion from a venerable Spectrum original. On one side of the tape you can play a full test match with a maximum of 450 overs. On the other side is a one day cricket match, in which you can decide the number of overs you wish to play but only one innings per team can be played.

When the game has loaded you have the choice of naming your own team(s) or using ones all ready in the computer's memory. If you win the toss you have the choice of batting or fielding. The match now begins.

*Test Match* is very easy to get into but tends to lose interest after a while. The graphics are very simplistic but strongly resemble those of the Spectrum original. Should appeal the cricket fans but it is doubtful whether the average game freak will like it.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 56%**

## CHOPPER SQUAD

*INTERCEPTOR MICROS*
*£6.00 cass*

*Chopper Squad* is loosely based on the Spectrum hit *Jetpac*. You are in control of a chopper and must fly about the screen picking up bits of a plane. Once you have a piece of the craft you must take it to the bottom right of the screen. There are four types of alien to contend with. As you make progress by building planes then the aliens start to home in on you and the game gets harder. To aid you in the task, you have been equipped with a rapid fire laser with which you can dispatch the aliens.

*Chopper Squad* is a reasonably enjoyable game to play but the graphics and sound are so poor that it becomes boring rapidly.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 21%**

Beating off the evil Zorin and saving the world yet again — it's you as Bond, James Bond.

# A VIEW TO A KILL

**Domark, £10.99 cass**
**Author: Software Technicians**

Placing you in the role of world famous secret serviceman James Bond, *A View to a Kill* pits your wits against the evil Max Zorin in a battle strung out over three programs. *A View to a Kill* is a three-games-for-the-price-of-one jobbie. There are three different scenarios leading up to the final battle. The first takes part in a mine beneath silicon valley. Max Zorin, villain of the piece, has planted a nuclear bomb underneath the San Adreas fault. The idea is that when the bomb explodes the whole of silicon valley, containing 90% of the world's chip production, should vanish into the Pacific. Zorin himself owns chip production complexes across the world and with Silicon Valley gone the market would be open for Zorin to charge any price he wanted.

For the mine sequence you control Bond via the joystick in an arcade adventure scenario. Travelling through a vast system of caves flip screen style, Bond has many tasks to accomplish on his way to defusing the bomb. Most useful item to be collected is the grapnel gun. More than likely you'll find yourself tumbling down ravines and cliffs. After brushing yourself down, the only way back is via your grapnel gun. Found on the very first screen, you're lost without it.

*A View to a Kill* includes real adventure elements. Commands are made entirely via the joystick without need for text input. The system for command input is called the duckshoot. If you press fire the game freezes and you have control of the duckshoot. There are two levels you can use, similar in a way to most adventure's verb/noun command structure. Move the joystick left or right to select and object, press fire then move the joystick to select the action. If the action doesn't warrant an object, for example the command SEARCH, then press fire when you enter the object duckshoot. As you collect items they are added to the item duckshoot with new objects being placed at the front of the list.

A series of puzzles are set. For starters you need to free Mayday, Zorrin's ex-girlfriend. Mayday can help you defuse the bomb by winching you down into the bomb pit. The trouble is Mayday has been left to die behind a wall deep in the bowels of the mine. To free her you need to find the lighter and some sticks of dynamite. Once you've found the wall that requires dynamiting, first use the dynamite and then the lighter, and the resultant blast is enough to release Mayday.

The second game, City Hall, has Bond trapped within the Los Angeles City hall while a fire is burning the place to the ground. Starting at the top floor, you have to work your way down through the seventy five roomed building to reach the bottom right hand corner. Though the pace is not as fast as the mine sequence, mindwork plays a more important role. The input method is the same as is used in the mine using the duckshoot.

On the final game, the Paris Chase, Bond must capture Mayday who has just parachuted from the top of the Eifel Tower. Seeing Mayday soar across the Paris skyline, Bond comandeers a taxi. The game shows a plan view and a windscreen view through Bond's taxi. Mayday lands randomly at one of eight sights around the capital. Using a directional beeper, Bond must reach Mayday's landing point before she does and avoid the local constabulary on the way.

## CRITICISM

**1** *A View to a Kill* **on the Amstrad is, admittedly, a lot better than its Commodore and Spectrum cousins though I'm afraid that's not really saying much. Even though you get three games for the price of one the value for money isn't really all that wonderful since many budget titles show a much higher standard of production. After all the hype and build up, this program is a real let down. I'm afraid the only point I could see in its favour was the music on the title screen. This is honestly some of the best music to date on the Amstrad but you can't really justify the price tag for a nice jingle. Duran Duran's album is a four pounds cheaper.**

**2** After some of the most impressive music I've heard on the Amstrad (Duran Duran's *View to a Kill*) I loaded the first part of the game in. After what seemed an eternity, the game started . . . I sat back, stunned, at what seemed like a squidgy mess filling the screen. After making sure that the game hadn't crashed I realised that in fact it was a rather gaudy 3D maze. After playing the game for a while boredom set in, after all 3D maze games are a bit passe nowadays. The other two parts were in the same class, with very poor graphics, sound and gameplay. Although it can be argued that this package contains three separate games for the price of one they are all rather sub-standard. Personally I'd prefer one good game to three poor ones and a good bit of music.

**3** *The only thing that really struck me about this game was the music, probably the best yet on the Amstrad. Otherwise it's a sequence of three fairly mediocre game, the best one being the mine game. The action tends to be slow, the graphics are poor and unimaginiative. The car chase is very silly, there you are roaring through Paris with a '3D' representation of the road ahead which just shows wall after wall. Yet on the aerial map above, you can see little cars which you are supposed to avoid, they never appear on the main display, why? I sometimes think the programmer was too lazy to finish the job. A shame really because a great deal more could have been made of the subject, instead one feels that the subject has been left to make the game.*

**Presentation 78%**
Nice loading screen/music, okay box, but rest disappoints.

**Graphics 59%**
Lacking in detail and 'believability'.

**Sound 83%**
Great music, pity about the weak spot FX.

**Playability 61%**
Apart from the mine sequence, not particularly playable.

**Addictive qualities 43%**
The game has little to grab you.

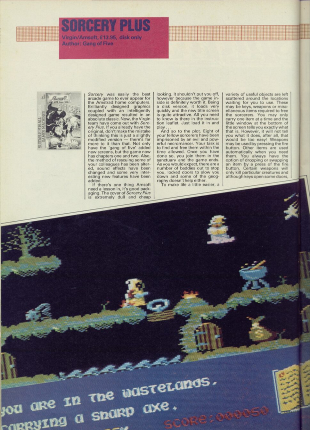
**Value for money 28%**
Three poor games don't add up to two quid over the odds.

**Overall 45%**
A generally disappointing game, after hoping for a lot more.


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# SORCERY PLUS

Virgin/Amsoft, £13.95, disk only
Author: Gang of Five




*Sorcery* was easily the best arcade game to ever appear for the Amstrad home computers. Brilliantly designed graphics coupled with an intelligently designed game resulted in an absolute classic. Now, the Virgin team have come out with *Sorcery Plus*. If you already have the original, don't make the mistake of thinking this is just a slightly modified version — there's far more to it than that. Not only have the 'gang of five' added new screens, but the game now has chapters one and two. Also, the method of rescuing some of your colleagues has been altered, sound effects have been changed and some very interesting new features have been added.

If there's one thing Amsoft need a lesson in, it's good packaging. The cover of *Sorcery Plus* is extremely dull and cheap looking. It shouldn't put you off, however because the game inside is definitely worth it. Being a disk version, it loads very quickly and the new title screen is quite attractive. All you need to know is there in the instruction leaflet. Just load it in and play . . .

And so to the plot. Eight of your fellow sorcerers have been imprisoned by an evil and powerful necromancer. Your task is to find and free them within the time allowed. Once you have done so, you join them in the sanctuary and the game ends. As you would expect, there are a number of baddies out to stop you, locked doors to slow you down and some of the geography doesn't help either.

To make life a little easier, a variety of useful objects are left scattered around the locations waiting for you to use. These may be keys, weapons or miscellaneous items required to free the sorcerers. You may only carry one item at a time and the little window at the bottom of the screen tells you exactly what that is. However, it will not tell you what it does, after all, that would be too easy! Weapons may be used by pressing the fire button. Other items are used automatically when you need them. You always have the option of dropping or swapping an item by a press of the fire button. Certain weapons will only kill particular creatures and although keys open some doors,




sometimes another object may be necessary. When this is the case there are often visual clues as to which object is needed. There are also some cauldrons which can replenish your energy — unfortunately some identical cauldrons deplete it rapidly, so be careful!

Other information supplied in the window includes a clock which appears in the form of a slowly vanishing spell book, a location description, an energy percentage and a score total (missing from the original).

In *Sorcery*, there were forty screens but in the new 'chapter one' there are forty-seven for you to explore.

Chapter one ends as the original game did, after you have rescued all eight of the trapped sorcerers. However, instead of relaxing in the sanctuary for the rest of your days, you gain access to a new door which leads you into the second part of the game. This section makes an interesting sequel. There are new objects and creatures and the graphics, are more impressive than in the first part.

This is where you actually do battle with the evil necromancer who caused all the hassle in the first place. He's so evil that love is a totally alien concept to him. So what you have to do is wander around, trying to find hearts, which you must collect and place all around him (a computer's idea of being smothered with love).

There are an extra twenty-eight screens in chapter two. Once you have reached the second section, you may continually restart your game from there. Unfortunately, to win, you do need to play right from the beginning (otherwise some areas will remain inaccessible), but you can use that facility as a kind of practice mode.

## CRITICISM

**1** *Sorcery*'**s sound track is above average for an Amstrad game (especially if you have a stereo adaptor). The soundtrack has now been altered and when your character gets killed, the effect is quite amusing. The only other sound effect which has noticably changed is the opening of doors. The previous version had a quite authentic creaking effect. This new one sounds like too much like a . . . well, computer game! Anyway, these are only minor gripes and are nothing to get worried about. It's a great game regardless and probably the best reason for owning an Amstrad disk drive.**

**2** Every single screen is accessed from the drive. The reasons for this are not clear as it was certainly not necessary (except perhaps as a protection device), but the disadvantage is that the game is slowed down somewhat. It is by no means as bad as if it had been on a Commodore, in fact it is a credit to Amstrad drives that they are so fast, but the result is slightly detrimental to the game's atmosphere. For all this, *Sorcery Plus* is a great game, full of intriguing puzzles and fast scraps. Also there is an all time high score table on the disk, as well as the normal one. It's a game full of imagination and excellent execution.

**3** *Sorcery Plus's speed restrictions due to disk access, spoil the game a little but there is no doubt that this is still one of the best graphic adventures out for the Amstrad. The graphics are the best ever seen on an Amstrad game and really do justice to the machine's advanced graphics capabilities. This makes a wonderful change from seeing straight Spectrum conversions with their limited two colour character blocks. The shading and colour mix result in an almost cartoon-like effect that really is state of the art. The sprites are smoothly animated and again, the choice of colours is striking without being silly or over the top. When you use something like a 'shooting star' (one of the more powerful weapons), red bolts shoot out from your character and, if they hit their intended target, the explosions are fast and dramatic. One added detail in the new game, which some may not like, is that on destruction of a creature, a scroll containing the points value for killing it appears briefly in its place. There are so many improvements over the original that I'm sure the vast majority of* Sorcery *fans will put up with the game's few bad points.*

### Presentation 85%
There are no options but they aren't needed. The title screen, scrolling messages and appearance are excellent. Would have been higher yet, had there been a better slip cover from Amsoft.

### Graphics 91%
No sense of perspective but that cannot detract from the beautiful colouring and animation.

### Sound 82%
Not quite as good as it could have been but makes good use of the stereo effects nonetheless.

### Playability 89%
With simple joystick control and pause option, there can be no complaints in this respect.

### Addictive qualities 85%
It is highly addictive if only from the point of view of getting to see all those marvellous screens.

### Value for money 85%
Considering what disk games can cost, fourteen pounds is hardly prohibitive.

### Overall 90%
**To date, graphically the best arcade adventure yet for the Amstrad.**



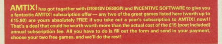

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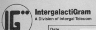
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+++++MISSION COMPUTER NEEDS NETWORKS DRAWING UP FROM DOT-TO-DOT IMPLEMENTATION - FAX PHOTOS SENT DOWN LINE TO OVEREATING AMTIX EDITOR JEM SPENCER. LUDLOW, ENGLAND, SOL III++++++

++++READERS NEED TO COMPLETE DOT-TO-DOT DRAWINGS, MATCH THEM UP TO FAXED PHOTOS AND SEND RESULT TO MISSION COMPUTER VIA CRUDE EARTH LETTERPOST METHOD TO STARION, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, ENGLAND, POST CODATION SY8 1DB BY 14 NOVEMBER 1985 FOR BEAMING UP TO URSULA MAJOR RECEIVING STATION++++++++

++++IF MORE THAN FIFTY CORRECT ENTRIES RECEIVED BY COLLATING COMPUTER, THEN RANDOM SORT AND SELECT ALGORITHM WILL BE APPLIED TO DETERMINE FIFTY WINNERS OF MELBOURNE HOUSE GAME - BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN ASSIGNED MYSTICAL AMTIX "ACCOLADE" STATUS AS TOKEN OF EARTHLING GRATITUDE FOR BEING DEAD BRILL++++++

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Date

*****MASTER COMPUTER INTERRUPT ON SLAVE TELEX COMPUTER INTERRUPT BUS*****

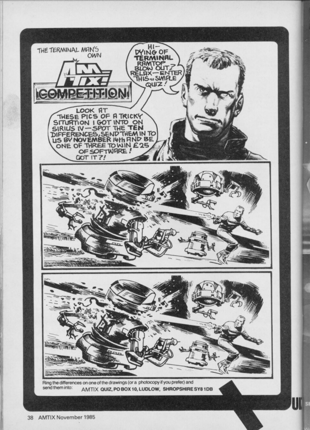
***********WHAT'S THIS "DEAD BRILL" GIBBERISH, OH MINION MACHINE?***********

++++++++SORRY BOSS, SLIPPING INTO COARSE EARTHLING USAGE OF META-LANGUAGE CONSTRUCTION++++++++

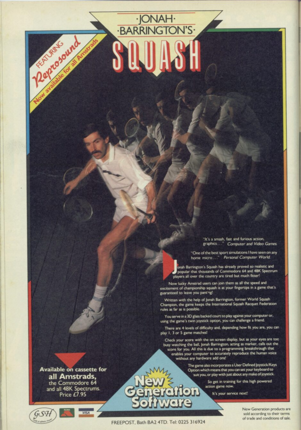
********SHUT DOWN MINION TELEX COMPUTER - YOU'VE BEEN AT THE THESAURUS AGAIN!********

*****MESSAGE TERMINATED EARTHLINGS - APOLOGIES FOR TRANSMISSION ERRORS - GET BUSY ON THIS BRILL :&&3%!>)(.....brekadown eroor rpart**brokdurn errire repa...eakbrown terror part

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Arcade and strategy action from Domark's CODE NAME MAT II

# CODENAME MAT II

**Domark, £8.95 cass**
**Author: Derek Brewster**

Set among the stars, *Codename Mat II* pits man against Alien in an epic struggle for superiority. Now that he's been given a new ship after *Codename Mat*, Mat is back bashing up the same old creepies as before, the Myons. This time they're trying their best to destroy the grids that supply vital energy to Earth. The energy is derived from Karillium mined on the planet Vesta deep within the Myon Zones. Impressed with the way you dealt with the last outbreak of Myon nastiness, Earth has supplied you with the latest in military technology, Centurion II, a high powered and extremely sophisticated spacecraft.

The idea is that you should destroy the Myon space fighters that are harming the essential satellite links in the energy grid. If you manage to kill all the Myons in the sector then you get a rest from alien zapping and the game's strategy elements come into play. Awarded a limited amount of time units to repair and replace damage to your ship and the energy grid, you must spend it wisely in trying to decide what is best to repair. How badly the satellites have been damaged depends on how long you've taken to wipe out the Myon fighters.

As waves progress, the Myons, obviously a miffed by your blasting their fleets to little bits, get more vicious. There are eight different waves, each wave employing different tactics. The first fleet are fighters and are more than a bit apathetic, only attacking when you seek them out. The second lot are more a kind of galactic exocet seeking you out like a guided missile, not actually firing, just giving it the old kamikaze run into your hull. The third screen's aliens are more thoughtfull and tend to employ the tactic of circling around you before striking. They also use cloaking devices making them invisible on the main screen.

The complexity of your ship means it's very easy to damage, a feature the Myons seem to rely on heavily. A status window constantly keeps you updated on the position of your ship with lines of text informing of any system damage. Luckily, if an essential ship's system is damaged and you can't wait until the end of the wave, you have two droids in your employ. Assigning them to a particular task may mean waiting for up to 15 minutes, and while the system is under repair it is totally inoperative. Should a droid be harmed then the other droid can repair his fellow toiler.

You are supplied with three sets of scanners. Long range, short range and battle computer. Apart from their range, their is little difference between the two scanners. Showing a 2D plan view of a sphere with your ship in the centre, the scanner also highlights the position of any aliens. When the aliens are really up close, it's wisest to use the battle computer. This device is intelligent and has two modes of display. On automatic it tracks the fighter nearest to your ship; manual mode allows you to track your own Myon. When a Myon fighter is in your immediate vicinity it appears in the main screen, a panoramic 3D view through the cockpit window.

To travel between different quadrants when chasing after Myons you need to use your trusty ion engine. Looking at the quadrant chart, you need to estimate the best warp factor and warp angle. Tripping on the warp engines is a bit dodgy if you have a dicky shield unit as micro particles threaten to penetrate the hull because of the enormous speed of travel. If the warp starts to harm the Centurion then you can always abort it.

Centurion II is supplied with two weapon systems, plasma and laser. Plasma guns are slow to recharge and the time they take to reach their target wouldn't win any medals either. Their only advantage over laser power is they don't overheat and explode. Throughout your battle a status box indicates how dire your present position is by informing you if it's condition blue, green, yellow or red. You die if any essential system is dead or if all the satellites are destroyed.

**Control keys:** in addition to directional and firing controls (joystick), some 14 keys are required.

## CRITICISM

**1** **Before I start it would only be fair to say that if you liked *Codename Mat* you're sure to enjoy *Mat II* since the scenario and challenge holds a great deal more depth than its predecessor while retaining the same game format. But if you weren't over keen on *Mat I*, regarding *Mat II* you'll be in the same boat as me, bored stiff. The game cannot really help but suffer comparison with *Starion* because of the similarity in game ideas, large alien zap sessions followed by some mind work, and I'm afraid *Codename Mat II* comes off worse in the comparison. The graphics would have been acceptable a year back but I'm afraid visually the game hasn't progressed at all since *Mat 1*. The strategic elements are interesting but too much emphasis is put on the alien blasting bit. It takes far too long to reach the end of a wave. Setting the warp co-ordinates is clumsy with the computer working in polar co-ordinates. Overall I really couldn't recommend this unless you were a big fan of the first game, otherwise . . . .**

**2** *Code Name Mat* was one of the early major games to be released on the Amstrad. When it came out for the Spectrum it was regarded as state of the art, deservedly so as well. *Code Name Mat 2* is not the fresh new idea that its predecessor was, in fact there are quite a lot of similarities between the two games. The Graphics are nothing like as fast or detailed as say *Starion*, but the gameplay is pretty good. The player is under quite a lot of pressure, especially when the enemy numbers start to increase and you have to repair the damage to your ship. A pretty exciting game and well worth buying if you are a space strategy shoot em up fan without *Code Name Mat* the first.

**3** *The graphics in this game are well up to scratch if perhaps just a little bit slow. What I really enjoyed about* Code Name Mat 2 *was the scenario. Once I had learnt to control my ship and could get stuck into the battle everything seemed very realistic. As the battle hotted up I found myself stretched to the limit trying to keep the nasties away from the satellites while at the same time doing the necessary repair work on my ship. An exhilarating and worthwhile game.*

**Presentation 68%**
Nothing amazing, though some very nice artwork with the packaging.

**Graphics 73%**
Not much change since Mat I.

**Sound 45%**
Almost non-existent, and what it does use isn't outstanding.

**Playability 69%**
Lots of controls makes it hard to get into, but fun once you have.

**Addictive Qualities 75%**
The strategic elements combined with arcade offer plenty to do, but reviewers' opinions were mixed as to long term appeal.

**Value for Money 72%**
A pound dearer than *Starion* and, though being a good game, is a mite overpriced.

**Overall 72%**
A good mixture of shoot em up and strategy, likely to appeal most people.



## COMBAT LYNX

*DURELL*
*£8.95 cass*

Piloting a Lynx helicopter, your mission is to provide air cover and support for the allied ground units. This support comes in the form of supplying several other bases with weapons, fuel and personnel from your home base 1 (the number of other bases depends on the skill level selected) and helping to destroy the oncoming forces of the enemy.

Instead of the usual view-from-the-cockpit you see the action from somewhere behind the Lynx but all your flight controls are right in front of you below the view screen. It's quite easy to get the hang of using the instruments but it takes some time before you can totally master them. The map is a particularly useful control; using it you can identify which ground vehicles are on your side and which ones should be destroyed. Once you have mastered the controls you can then start to enjoy *Combat Lynx* properly.

The whole game has a very professional polished look to it. The graphics and scrolling, while simple, work very well; you feel that you are actually flying the helicopter. Below you can see battles raging; vehicles trying to drive over hills which are too steep for them and houses scrolling towards you at high speed. While in the air enemy jets and helicopters engage you in battle.

Compared to the other computer's versions of this game the Amstrad one is the best and it is a very good flight/strategy simulation which should keep admirers of this type of game happy for hours.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 83%**

## SIR LANCELOT

*MELBOURNE HOUSE*
*£6.95 cass*

As Sir Lancelot it is your task to investigate 24 rooms of a castle and collect the flashing items in each room. In this fast platform game you must collect all the objects from a room before an exit is revealed, and you must also contend with the 'guardians' of those items.

You start off in a room full of flashing axes, Merlin's magic teleport chamber. This is a selection room where you can decide upon the sequence of rooms to be visited; just walk up to an axe and you are transported to another room. Whenever a room is completed you return to this first room where you can decide again which room to visit next. Each has a time limit for the collection of the flashing objects. You have 3 lives at the start and a new one is awarded every 2000 points. Should you lose a life in a room, then the time limit is reset to 999 and all the flashing objects (had any been collected) reappear.

The graphics featured in *Sir Lancelot* are very simple but effective. The whole appearance of the game makes it look very simple and boring but that's misleading because in play it is great fun. It should take some time to complete because the screens vary in difficulty, and some objects require a high degree of arcade skill to collect them. Generally, a very enjoyable game.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 79%**

## OH MUMMY

*AMSOFT/GEM*
*£8.95 cass*

You have been appointed the head of an archaeological expedition to Egypt. Your party initially consists of five members. The task is to enter five levels of each pyramid, and recover form each five Royal Mummies and as much treasure as you can.

Each level has been partially excavated by previous expeditions and it is up to you and your colleagues to complete the digs. Unfortunately, the workers' digging has aroused Guardians left behind by the ancient Egyptians to protect their royal tombs.

The partly excavated levels are in the form of a grid made up of twenty boxes. To uncover a box move your team around all four sides of the box. When the boxes holding a key and the royal mummy have been uncovered you can progress to the next level.

The best way to describe *Oh Mummy* is as a sort of 'Pacman' variant with 'Painter' overtones. The graphics are extremely simple, reflecting the very early Spectrum original's — indeed, the whole game is simple. Fun to play but not for very long, extremely dated now and hardly worth considering.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 29%**

# CHILLER

**Mastertronic, £1.99 cass**

In a glut of new Amstrad budget software from Mastertronic they have decided to release *Chiller*, a convert from an old 64 version (that also went onto the Spectrum less successfully).

The plot has your girlfriend sweating it out in a haunted house in which she's mysteriously been imprisoned. Good and caring soul that you are you decide that you should rescue her from a grisly fate but just as your driving to the scene of the crime your car conks out in the middle of a haunted forest, choc-a-bloc with spooks and werewolves.

Your first job then is to make it on foot through the forest keeping well clear of the energy draining ghosts. You are able to run, jump and climb the bewitched trees via joystick or keys. Placed around the screens are blue and purple mushrooms, each having a different effect on the player. Should you be un-

Blasting through the ghetto screen in CHILLER.

The weird cinema where all sorts of nasty things can happen.





fortunate enough to touch a blue mushroom, your energy is sorely depleted; however purple mushrooms are a boon, giving a small burst to your energy supply. Around the forest screen are a number of collapsing platforms that can only be travelled over once. To get through a screen you have to collect a number of blue crosses to ward off unholy spirits. Once you possess all the holy crosses, you are transported onto the next screen.

There are five sheets in *Chiller* each a static picture filling most of the screen. There is also an energy bar depicting you current state. If the bar reaches zero then it's game over as only one life is allotted.

Once into the second screen you'll find yourself trapped in a cinema, a crumbly old one at that, since you have to avoid plaster falling from the roof. On the third screen it's down to the ghetto, hopping from tenament to tenament, avoiding various flying creatures. The fourth is a graveyard and the final is the haunted house. This screen takes the same format as the others but once you have freed your girl, all is not over. You have to get back through all five screens to the relative safety of your car.

Returning is not as easy as it may seem, because the attack of the meanies becomes a lot more determined. Also you need to guide both the girl and the boy, switching control as you go. The boy still has to collect the blue crosses but now the girl has to collect a set of pink ones.

**Control keys: cursors, Spc to alternate between boy and girl.**

## CRITICISM

**1** **This is yet another platform game, and one which doesn't really stand out from the masses of others. *Chiller* is a five screen jumping/collecting game where the ultimate aim is to reach your imprisoned girlfriend and rescue her. It's all pretty bland stuff and the type of game we've all seen too many times before. The game might be hard but when you work out that each screen costs 40p it just doesn't seem good value for money.**

**2** *Chiller* was one the first pieces of decent budget software to appear and at the time it was very good – at least on the 64 it was. Nowadays, though, it's not so hot, the basic design hasn't changed a jot since its first appearance. Looking at it now all I see is a mundane platform game badly executed. The graphics are of a low quality and move in a jerky fashion. I'm afraid the game doesn't even warrant the £1.99 price tag with not only other

## DUN DARACH

*GARGOYLE GAMES*
*£9.95 cass*

The hero of two cult Spectrum games has, at last, made his first venture on to the Amstrad. *Dun Darach* is a legendary city in which your friend and charioteer, Loeg, has been imprisoned by the evil sorceress, Skar, in retribution for the death of Amhair, a prince of the Conachta. Your task as Cuchulainn the Great is, by solving various puzzles, to rescue Loeg and escape from the city.

The principle object in *Dun Darach* is money. With money you can buy objects necessary to solve the puzzles. Making money is a game in itself and there are several honest and dishonest ways to do it: you can try buying and selling at a profit; stealing goods and selling them (which is highly profitable but also risky, watch out for Ryde, the local Yeoman who, if you are caught stealing, will gladly take all the objects that you possess and your money); by banking your money and letting it build up slowly (1% interest is awarded for every day that your money stays in the bank) or you could always pay a visit to the gambling houses and get rich quick or become bust even quicker.

Besides the traders, who don't move, there are 10 other characters that inhabit *Dun Darach*. These are represented by one basic male or female character, each one is fully animated in great detail and even their hair blows in the wind. If another character besides yourself or a trader is on screen then a cursor (made up of their first initial) follows their movement across the screen, and their full name appears at the bottom, which makes identification easy. As well as being fully animated, each character has their own personality – some are pickpockets, one a gossip and another an exiled map maker but all have one thing in common, they each want something and in return they will each give an object to you. Of these objects some will be useful and others will merely give you a clue to another task that must be performed before your goal is achieved.

Dun Darach

As you can no doubt appreciate there is more than meets the eye in *Dun Darach*. The graphics are superb, some of the best yet to grace the Amstrad, but it is the atmosphere created within the game that makes it a real winner; you can almost feel that you really know the main characters and it can be quite a disappointment to actually complete the game because you suffer a sense of loss at withdrawing from the fictional world that Gargoyle Games have created. One bonus that *Dun Darach* has over many conversions from other computers is that it differs from the Spectrum original. The Amstrad version has a different solution, so in its own way this is an original game.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 93%**

## ROLAND IN THE CAVES

*AMSOFT/INDESCOMP*
*£8.95 cass*

The year is 2464 AD and your space time machine has just landed on an alien planet. Being of an inquisitive nature you get out of your ship to explore the new found world. As well as owning a time machine you are possessed of the capability to mutate into the alien beings' form and explore unnoticed. On the new planet the alien form happens to resemble a flea.

While exploring the planet you come across a mysterious looking hole. Jumping over it you miscalculate and fall down the crevice into a strange cave. Using your jumping abilities you must work your way back up through the cave and return to the surface but this is not easy. The cave happens to be inhabited by a rather nasty flea eating Pterodactyl not to mention the odd flea flesh eating plant.

*Roland in the Caves* just happens to be the Amstrad conversion of the Spectrum hit *Bugaboo the Flea*. The graphics have been improved upon tremendously though the scrolling is extremely poor. Getting to the top of the cave can be very enjoyable as well as taking a lot of practice but once you have mastered the technique of timing the jumps and their strength the game loses much of its point. Overall it is quite a nice game which is a bit dated now but there isn't much to it.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 47%**

## SULTAN'S MAZE

*AMSOFT/GEM*
*£8.95 cass*

The sultan of Bagdhad, whilst on a state visit to England in the 14th century, had the misfortune to be set upon by a band of cutthroat vagabonds who stole the his treasure chest. This chest contained his youngest daughter's dowry of 6 priceless rubies.

The Sultan's personal champion chased the group of robbers into the Hampton Court maze. Here he was attacked and savagely murdered. During the fight the 6 rubies were dropped at various points in the maze.

The harzardous task before you is to enter the maze in search of the jewels but you must avoid the ghost of the bodyguard who roams the maze and kills anyone who tries to retrieve them. Fortunately he was not a bright person and his ghost has retained this factor.

When you have recovered the jewels you are given 5 attempts at guessing a magic spell which transports you back in time and to a greater wealth.

*Sultan's Maze* is just like those old 3D maze games that used to be all the rage on the ZX81. The graphics are okay for this sort of game but they look rather boring. The sound is extremely poor and could be much better used. Though a fairly playable game, there can't be many people who would find it addictive for long. Another poor, boring and dated game.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 27%**

## HANDICAP GOLF

*CRL*
*£6.95 cass*

Golf is a hard game to put on to a home computer, and sadly CRL's version of this game is now a bit dated, having first appeared on the Spectrum a couple of years back.

You have the choice of whether to play a full round of golf or just 9 holes. Once the game begins you must choose the type of club to use and the direction in which to hit the golf ball. This isn't a bad simulation but it has very little appeal or addictive qualities to it. *Handicap Golf* will only really appeal to golf fanatics

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 38%**



companies' budget efforts far outclassing this half hearted attempt, but even Mastertronic's own! Nice music though.

**3** *Yes it's finally here the game that nobody wanted on any other computer. I would have thought that Mastertronic had learnt their lesson, but here it is anyway. Having said that, this is a very different game to the one that CRASH reviewed a few months ago for the Spectrum. The sound is completely different and in fact for about five minutes I even liked it, but it was very repetitive and in the end I turned the sound off. The graphics are very blocky and they do get a little muddled up with other things on the screen. Controlling your man is fairly easy once you've distinguished him from the rest of the mess walking around the screens. There are some disconcerting effects that don't help playability ... like falling from the bottom of the cinema up to the top on the second screen.*



**Presentation 51%**
Standard packaging, but poor control and general game appearance drags it down.

**Graphics 41%**
Very muddy, flickery and blocky.

**Sound 50%**
Great tune, shame about the FX.

**Playability 40%**
Poor joystick control spoils a game that's immediately playable . . .

**Addictive qualities 38%**
. . . until you reach the 2nd screen. After that, lasting appeal fails.

**Value for money 43%**
Fails to cut it, even at the low price.

**Overall 33%**
Not one of Mastertronic's better efforts.



## FRANK BRUNO'S BOXING

*ELITE*
*£8.95 cass*

The object of Frank Bruno's boxing is to defeat 8 boxers in succession in order to get the world heavyweight title. To defeat a boxer you must learn their individual styles then you must knock them down three times. This is done by reducing the opponent's status to zero (by repeated hits, when the punch power indicator reaches maximum the right hook or upper cut can be used) but you must also dodge the other boxer's hits. Should your opponent knock you down three times then the game will end.

When a boxer is defeated you will be given an EVBA code (Elite Video Boxing Association). This code enables you to access the next boxer, just enter the code and start the B-side of the tape but you must remember to always use the same name.

As Frank you have a variety of possible moves including: Guard up or down, left or right punch, dodge left or right, right hook, upper cut and duck. The type of punch that is used depends on whether your guard is up or down; if your guard is up then you will deliver a punch to the head, if your guard is down then Frank will do a body punch. The right hook or upper cut, as mentioned, can only be used when the KO indicator is flashing.

All eight opponents vary quite a bit in size, meanness and fighting styles. The first boxer that you fight, Canadian Crusher, is big and lumbering but because of this, he is quite easy to defeat. Fling Long Chop is small, fast and a master of the martial arts, beware of his kicks. Andra Puncheredov, from the USSR, is a fast dancing Russian who enjoys headbutting you. Tribal Trouble has a vicious temper and lands punches with unnerving accuracy. Frenchie appears to be suave and sophisticated but he is ready to make you see stars. Ravioli Mafiosi knows all the dirty tricks and is quite prepared to use them. Antippodean Andy is Australia's champ, he feels no pain. Peter Perfect is the current world champ and, as his name ,suggests he is the most neat and accurate boxer in history.



**Frank Bruno's Boxing**

Elite have transferred the arcade hit, *Punch Out*, brilliantly to the home computer. Each of the opponents have their own personalities, all brought out in the amusing and well animated graphics, which makes the game extremely enjoyable. *Frank Bruno's Boxing* is instantly playable and very addictive, the variety of boxers means there is plenty of scope for good fights. Overall a very good game that most people should enjoy.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 87%**

## SOFTWARE STAR

*ADDICTIVE GAMES*
*£7.95 cass*

You have just been made a manager in a new software firm. Your brief from the directors is to raise £10,000 by the end of your first year in business but you also have your own private ambition — to become a Software Star.

To start off with you are given one finished game and you, as their star programmer, begin work on another program. Reviews play an important part in *Software Star*and your sales can either be high or low depending on the outcome of the reviews. You must cope with staff problems, advertising, summer slumps and public relations. It is all too easy to get into debt and either be declared bankrupt or be sacked.

*Software Star*, although an amusing game to play, is also rather frustrating because it is very hard to succeed even on beginner level. It can also be very unrealistic at times; if it had been this hard to start off in the software industry it's doubtful that there would have been one. After all a fledgling company doesn't go around spending £11,000 on overheads (this does not include duplication of tapes, wages or anything like that) or £11,000 in salaries for one month. One last moan is how come it costs £10,000 to launch a new game? once again this does not include advertising or any other extras such as duplicating. *Millionaire* offers more fun and game at the end of the day.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 52%**

## BRAXX BLUFF

*AMSOFT/MICROMEGA*
*£8.95 cass*

Man has progressed far beyond the limits of the solar system and has begun to explore the unimaginably distant worlds in the search for resources and knowledge. In every new system an intergalactic rescue cruiser stands at the ready in case of an emergency. It is manned by volunteers of the Life corps. You are such a volunteer and the emergency at Braxx Bluff will either make you a hero or a memory.

The lifeship Vega has stabilised orbit around the planet Prolon in response to a distress call from the planet below. Three members of an exploratory team left their base in a rover and have fallen prey to the energy hungry creatures who inhabit the world. The creatures have been feeding on the energy banks in the rover which now lies stranded without power, the occupants slowly dying as the life support systems fail. Your mission is simple — land, find the rover and return to base in time to save the lives of the crew.

There are 5 stages to the game. Should you land safely then you must proceed on foot towards the sound, but you havp to avoid the birds which are out to get you. When you complete this stage you discover the rover and it is your task to drive it as fast as you can down the road. Next comes the the sea skimming. Here the rover stays at fall speed to avoid sinking but the sea is full of rocks which must be avoided at all costs. A direction finder guides you by the pitch of a sound towards the base. If you complete that stage then you arrive at the base and a new mission starts.

*Braxx Bluff* has rather odd looking but very simplistic graphics that generate a reasonable representation of 3D. The sound isn't up to much but it has a critical role in the game. A playable entertainment that takes quite a bit of practice before you can get anywhere, *Braxx Bluff* has the necessary qualities to bring you back to play it again. It may look very simple but it works quite well.

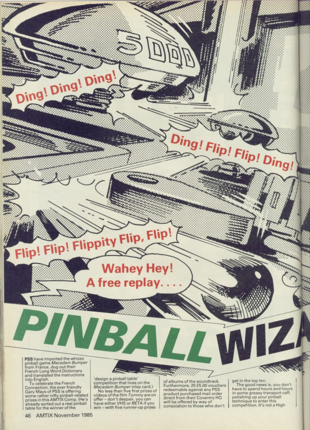
**Overall AMTIX! ratings: 78%**

## DEFEND OR DIE

*ALLIGATA*
*£7.95 cass*

Almost everyone must be familiar with the 'Defender' type of game so this one will need no introduction. *Defend or Die* is a true-to-the-arcade copy of the video game that spawned a whole host of super fast shoot em ups. The graphics are almost the same and the sound is very good (absolutely terrific when heard through stereo speakers). The only big draw back is that the game is a bit sluggish compared to the arcade version, which might put seasoned arcade addicts off but if you, like many other people, always found 'Defender' a bit too hard (mainly due to its speed) then this should be a welcome alternative. On the whole this is quite a good game but the type is such that if you are looking for more depth then forget it.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 69%**



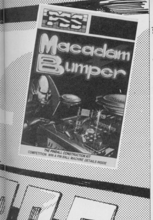

# PINBALL WIZ

PSS have imported the whizzo pinball game *Macadam Bumper* from France, dug out their French Long Word Dictionary and translated the instructions into English.

To celebrate the French Connection, the ever friendly Gary Mays of PSS is offering some rather nifty pinball-related prizes in this AMTIX Comp. (He's already sorted out a real pinball table for the winner of the 'design a pinball table' competition that lives on the *Macadam Bumper* inlay card.)

No less than five first prizes of videos of the film *Tommy* are on offer – don't despair, you can have either VHS or BETA if you win – with five runner-up prizes of albums of the soundtrack. Furthermore, 25 £5.00 vouchers redeemable against any PSS product purchased mail order direct from their Coventry HQ will be offered by way of consolation to those who don't get in the top ten.

The good news is, you don't have to spend hours and hours in some greasy transport caff, polishing up your pinball technique to enter this competition. It's not a High




AMTIX! COMPETITION

ARDRY

Score Challenge or anything awkward like that. Nooo. Nice and straightforward, five questions to do with the film *Tommy* which shouldn't be too much of a brain strain. So 'ere goes my little cabbages, on with ze questions, mes braves . . . . . and get your solutions in to AMTIX PINBALL, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB by 14th November.

**1) Where did Tommy find his first pinball machine?** a) In a caff off the A1; b) in a pub; c) in a scrapyard; d) at the Youth Centre

**2) Who played Tommy's step-father in the film?** a) Oliver Reed; b) John Le Mesurier; c) Dinsdale Langden; d) Michael Caine

**3) Who sang *Pinball Wizard*?** a) The Who; b) Elton John; c) Dave Clark; d) Adam Faith

**4) Who played the lead character, Tommy?** a) Robert Powell; b) Roger Daltrey; c) Keith Moon; d) Pete Townsend

**5) Tiebreaker: Where did the Baked Beans come from?**

PREVIEW

Frankly I am surprised that it has taken so long for a company to build a game around that universally admired, time-hopping do-gooder, **Doctor Who**. I suspect that getting a licence agreement out of Auntie Beeb is a lot more difficult than breaking into the Tardis. Nevertheless, **Micro-Power** have managed it, Doctor Who and some of his chums (and non-chums) will be appearing soon — in *The Mines of Terror*.

If you are an ex-patriate BBC owner then you may remember Micro-Power's very popular game *Castle Quest*. **Scrollerama** was a feature that worked very well in *Castle Quest*, so well in fact that they have used it again in this latest game. All that it really means is that the television acts rather like a window over the playing area, as the Doctor is moved to the screen edge then the next screen scrolls into view; not the most sophisticated technique perhaps but it has been used to great effect in this game.

Now if the good Doctor is the hero of the game then you may already have some idea of what to expect, after all Doctor Who is not some sort of interstellar Rambo dashing from planet to planet zapping everything and everybody in sight — certainly not. We are dealing with a gentleman super hero, one who has proved time and time again that brains can triumph over brawn. *The Mines of Terror* is a graphic adventure, played arcade style. You will have to pit your wits against the fiendish enemy by solving problems, cracking codes and generally knowing just when and where to stick your sonic screwdriver.

The game is set on the second moon of Rijar. As you all know, this is the sort of place where, if the sign on the intergalactic highway says, 'Next highway services 40 million lights years', you check your fuel and decide to chance running out rather than stop there. The Doctor goes to the moon because someone has decided to build themselves a machine called a Chaos Weapon; take my word for this it is a very unpleasant bit of machinery. To complete the weapon two items are required — a good supply of the mineral Heatonite, of which Rijar's second moon happens to have quite a bit, and the Doctor's brain. Well it may already have occurred to you that these evil plans can be thwarted if the Doctor just keeps his brain to himself. Maybe, but that just isn't his style, he doesn't like the idea of half completed Chaos Weapons and so decides to 'go in', scarf flailing.

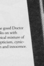
Doctor Who's task is to penetrate the mine workings, which are guarded by all sorts of electro trickery. This involves chuntering around the huge mine complex, finding and using objects, distracting guards and working out how to get into areas where he really shouldn't be. His aim is to stop the production of Heatonite, disable the all-important **Time Instant Relay Unit** and get hold of the plans to the weapon. Now you might think this an arduous mission, and you would be right. However, you are provided with some help. With the game comes your briefing documents, a map of the mine workings, a decoding device and a symbols decoding guide. If you get really stuck early on in the game, you might be tempted to open the envelope for a clue that will get you past the first problem and boost your confidence no end — well, for a while at least.

*The Mines of Terror* will be available on cassette from the **17th October** at a cost of **£14.95**. But first perhaps I should level with you and tell you just who you are up against. Surely you can guess — why it's the dreaded dastardly Master.

BIDDLY BIM, BIDDLY BIM,
DUDDLY DUM, DUDDLY DUM

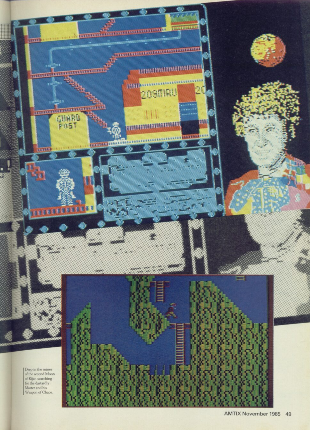
BIDDLY BIM, BIDDLY BIM,
DUDDLY DUM, DUDDLY DUM

WHEE—OOOOOOOOOHH . . .



The good Doctor looks on with typical mixture of scepticism, cynicism and innocence.

**(Okay, so we're not giving a free record away on the cover, otherwise you would recognise the above as the theme tune from DOCTOR WHO — wouldn't you . . . )?**




Deep in the mines of the second Moon of Rijar, searching for the dastardly Master and his Weapon of Chaos.

# SCOOBY DOOBY DOO!

**So you thought you needed a laser disk system to run on interactive cartoon-based game? The Scooby Squad at Elite believe otherwise . . . we checked out progress on the Amstrad cartoon-action game which should be released this month**

Rather than produce a straight arcade adventure, the team of programmers working on the game of the cartoon **Scooby-Do** decided to try for a very different game — a game in which you direct the action rather than play in the more usual "up/down, left/right" modes. From the very start of the project, the plan was to produce a form of computer generated cartoon film, which starred the quintet of characters made famous in their adventures on the TV screen. **Scooby-Do** cartoons all follow a similar storyline — the quartet of humans, aided and abetted by the lovable, easily scared and permanently hungry hound, find themselves investigating ghostly goings-on in a spine-tingling location.

While the artists in Elite's Scooby Squad began studying videos of the cartoons, working out accurate animations from freeze framed action, the programmers set about developing a system which allowed them to compress data and combine screens and animation sequences so that a cartoon film could be squeezed into a home computer.

The plot soon developed. Set in a Scottish castle, *Scooby-Do*, the game, features the ghost-hunting chums — Scooby, Shaggy, Fred, Daphne and Velma. Shaggy's auntie owns the castle and has had spook trouble for some time. She finally decides to leave her home forever when who should turn up, but her nephew Shaggy and his friends. Auntie is just leaving as they arrive and the gang persuade her to let them have a go at getting to the root of her hauntings.

Auntie agrees, and decides to go away but only for a couple of days while they try to sort things out for her — if they don't work out what's going on in 48 hours, however, she's leaving and never coming back.

Essentially, the game will feature seven or eight action sequences which are separated by descriptive scenes in which characters in the game interact by meeting and having a chat. The whole game is played against the clock, and to complete it you will need to go through all the levels and unmask the 'spook' who has been trying to scare Auntie off for so long.

Decision time as Scooby slithers down the refuse chute — time for you, the player to intervene.

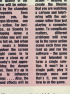
In the action sequences you will follow Scooby and Shaggy as they search the castle and need to help them solve (or avoid) problems as they arise and generally guide them on their way. You drive the action in the game, acting rather like a film director, taking decisions that affect the outcome of events. After each action sequence has been played through, the scene will fade to a descriptive section where you eavesdrop on conversations and can pick up clues, tips and hints which will help you solve the mystery.

When we visited the Scooby Squad they were confident that they had perfected the cartoon generating system that they would use to edit the screens into the finished game, and most of the design work on the individual screens — or 'shots' — from the storyboard had been committed to computer memory with the animation sequences. A few final details needed working out, and then the editing would begin. For with this game creating system, assembling the final program is rather like editing a film or videotape. The raw material is all there, as is the means to combine it into a sensible whole — it's the skill of the editor that accounts for the polish of the finished product.

In the beginning, there was the text-only adventure game. Then came the adventure game with graphics, which developed into the arcade adventure. Elite could well take a significant step forward and become known as the creators of the Cartoon Adventure. *Scooby*'s a game to watch for. . . .



The opening screen of the first action sequence. A bedroom in Auntie's castle. Shaggy is snoring in his bed, while Scooby slumbers on a ledge. Note the picture — in haunted houses, the eyes tend to move. Suddenly a trapdoor opens beneath Scooby and the startled hound is sliding down a refuse chute

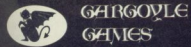


**In Scooby, the cartoon quality of the game will be enhanced by the changing viewpoints from which you, the player/director, see the action. For instance, as Scooby is lolloping down a corridor you will see him full on, but when he nears a hidden trapdoor the screen might zoom in to show a close up of Scooby's feet approaching the danger spot. Then it's up to you to influence things . . . . Also, the sound effects will be synchronised to the action – helping to create the illusion that you are watching a cartoon and interfering with the outcome rather than just playing a computer game. To complicate matters, different problems will crop up in the same action scene each time you load up and run the software – the game is not intended to have a single solution. It won't be a single path; play it through once and that's it, you know how to do the game.**

**These are sample screens (Spectrum version) which give a flavour of the fun to come in Elite's cartoon adventure — the start of a new genre?**

# MARSPORT

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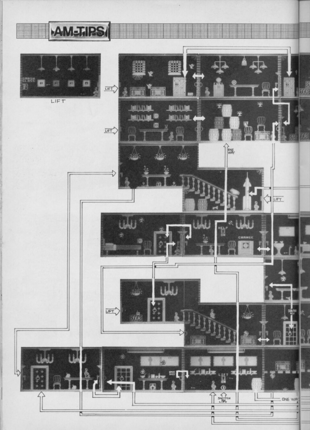

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DUN DARACH
The Map
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DEPOSIT HOUSE
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BROKER
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BAKER STREET
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SILVER STREET
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SECRET DOOR
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BROKER
DICE STREET
CASTLE
OLD QUARTER
GRAY MARKET MERCER HILL
GRAY MARKET THIEVES HILL
ARGOT
IOMAIN
RATHA-DE
THE SOKE
WITH THANKS TO:
ALLAN DIXON
SANDRA FALLOWS
LAURENCE MOLLOY
JULIAN BOWMAN
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HIGH GATE
JAIL HOUSE
CASTLE
WEST CASTLE
MARSH GATE
ROOM OF NO EXIT
CASTLE WALK
THE PARADE
MERCER 5
THE PARADE
KING STREET
OAK ROAD
NEW STREET
2 DEPOSIT HOUSE
4 FLETCHER
26 SWORDSMITH
ARMOURER 5
27 CARPENTER
4 FARMER
DEPOSIT HOUSE 12
COOPER 7
DEPOSIT HOUSE 9
LONG LANE
LONG LANE
6 DRAPER
ARCHIVIST
DEPOSIT HOUSE 28
GROCER 14
29 SALTER
8 BROKER
BARBER 14
10 SKINNER
30 PORTAL
DEPOSIT HOUSE 38
WALL
STREET
12 APOTHECARY
HILL STREET
MARSH STREET
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37 DEPOSIT HOUSE
32 DEPOSIT HOUSE
APOTHECARY 58
31 BROKER
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34 GALLERY
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CALLS
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MINSTREL
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DEPOSIT HOUSE 55
ALCHEMIST 57
BIRD STREET
BIRD STREET
HAIL PARTHOL 22
19 HAIL DANU
23 DEPOSIT HOUSE
HAIL NIPIR 35
ANTIQUARY 59
STREET
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71 GALLERY
73 MAGICK
15 PORTAL
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CLAW LANE
LOCKED SOUTH GATE
SECRET DOOR

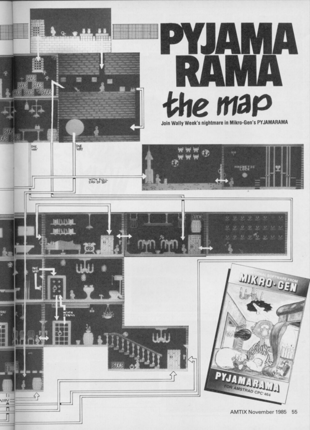


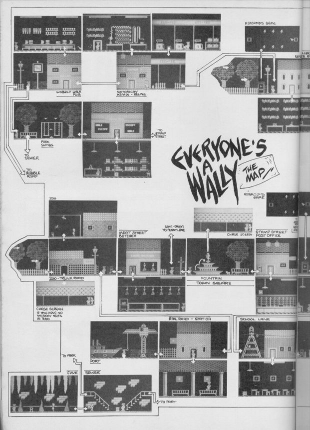
AM-TIPS
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# PYJAMA RAMA

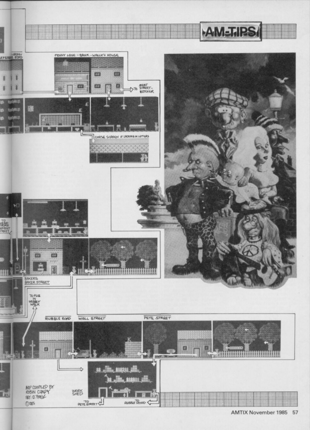
## the map

**Join Wally Week's nightmare in Mikro-Gen's PYJAMARAMA**





EVERYONE'S A WALLY
THE MAP
ASTEROIDS GAME
WOBBLY WALK PUB
MOTORWAY KEMCO - BEE PEE
PARK SWINGS
TO SEWER
TO STAMP STREET
TO RUBBLE ROAD
ASTEROIDS GAME
ZOO
MEAT STREET BUTCHER
BANK - DALLY'S TO PENNY LANE
CHASE SCREEN
STAMP STREET POST OFFICE
ZOO - TRUNK ROAD
FOUNTAIN
TOWN SQUARE
CHASE SCREEN IF YOU HAVE NO MONKEY NUTS IN ZOO
RAIL ROAD - STATION
SCHOOL LANE
TO PARK
PORT
CAVE
SEWER
TO PORT


PENNY LANE – BANK – WALLY'S HOUSE
TO MEAT STREET-BUTCHER
CHASE SCREEN IF LOOKING IN LETTERS
BAKERS
BAKER STREET
TO PUB IN WOBBLY WALK
RUBBLE ROAD
WALL STREET
PETE STREET
WORK SHED
TO PETE STREET
TO RUBBLE ROAD
MAP COMPILED BY
ROBIN CANDY
ART: O. FREY
© 1985

# AMTIPS from Robin Candy

In the early days of computer magazines, games playing tips were usually useful hints on how to achieve higher scores for those players less than familiar with arcade machines. The avid arcade player quickly sussed out the 'boards', and then went on to score massively, and it was these sorts of hints that were published. Then a few players noticed that if you stuck in the extreme top left corner of a sheet on, say, Spectrum *Lunar Jetman*, you could kill the nasties without getting touched. A bug?

Bug spotting to the benefit of the high scorer became an art form. Then *Manic Miner* and *Jet Set Willy* added a new dimension — breaking into the program and, by entering POKES, altering the paramters of the game. Within weeks, this new game within a game became the rage. Now it is quite accepted that many games players will want to 'alter' the way the game was originally programmed to be able to cheat — it's half the fun. As a result, playing tips have become more varied, complex and interesting, and so has my job.

If you have never read *CRASH* then you won't know me, but I've been playing games and giving tips away on them in CRASH for more months than I care to mention. I've also been playing games day and night on my Amstrad for the past three months, getting ready to present AMTIPS.

As far as submitting tips goes all you have to do is send in any useful information to the address printed at the end of the column and, if your tips are good enough, you may win one of the fabulous AMTIX! T shirts which are being lovingly designed at this very moment by the art supremo Oliver Frey, plus a game of your choice — all this for just a couple of jottings on a scrap of paper!

I am in need of POKES so if you are a budding hacker get your fingers walking through someone else's code and send me the relevant program listings and you too could win a prize.

Okay, that's enough of the intro blurb (I'm forced to write one of these type of things for each column) so without further ado feast your eyes on the pages of information that follow.

## PYJAMARAMA

Thanks to Barry Jordan of Banbury any Wallies out there who are still stuck in *Pyjamarama* it is now possible to complete game without too much bother.

To get the key to wind the alarm clock and wake up Wally, you must go to the moon. The screen after the moon has a magnetic lock which you must break by getting the magnet. 1) Get the bucket and fill it with water from the tap in the bathroom.
2) Get the plant pot and the bucket filled with water to the room that has the venus fly traps and the B.P. can. The fly traps are now immobilized and you can collect the B.P. can, leaving the bucket of water.
3) Next, to fill the B.P. can collect the triangle key from the third floor, from the lift room. It should be near the rocket.Together with key and can go out of the first floor from the lift room and go out of the first door you come to walking right.The B.P. can is now filled with petrol from the fuel pump.
4) On the moon there are aliens; the only way to get past them is to have a laser gun full. Now this is hard! a) exchange the pound for the penny. b)the penny gets you into the toilet. c) get the hammer from the toilet, go to the lift room and exchange the hammer for the fire extinguisher. d) leave lift room via door 3. Go out of the next room via door furthest right, climb the tea chests and go out of the window. Now walk right and you will appear in a room with a still fire. The fire extinguisher lets you past the fire. Walk right past the fire and after you have fallen down, you must immediately walk left and collect the square key. Walking left, go out of this room or a huge ball will kill you. With the square key you can now get into the snooker room - get the laser gun and exit. e) now go into the lift room and make sure you have the triangle key and laser gun. Go out of the lift room via exit 1. Now walk out of the first door you come to when walking right. You should now be in the room with the fuel pump.Walk out of the door on the right and immediately jump onto the third tea chest and onto the table.Get the battery, and the laser gun should now be full. f) leave the battery where you found it and go through the down exit. g) now, with the full laser gun and the full petrol can, go into the lift room and exit via No 3 door. You then get into the rocket and arrive at the moon. The aliens allow you to pass because you have a full laser gun and you can now get the key to wind up Wally's alarm clock but first you must have the magnet so follow these tips.

1) To get the scissors get the ignition keys then slide down the bannister to get the crash helmet. When you have got the crash helmet get the library ticket and exchange this for the library book. The combination of the crash helmet and the library book will allow you to get the scissors.B 2) Well, Wally, with that done you now have to put the HELP button ON, which makes a tea chest appear in the room with the box key.B 3) O.K., Wally, you now have to go to the room with the box key and balloon in it (making sure you've still go the scissors) and touch the balloon (sometimes you have to go back round and put the HELP back ON). The balloon will take Wally up, so all you have to do now is jump along and get the box key.B

4) Go to the kitchen and you can now swap the box key for the magnet.B 5) Right now that you have done all that the rest is simple (?) Go to the moon, where you have previously left a full laser gun, walk into the next room and jump at the magnetic lock and the bars guarding the clock key will disappear. Collect the clock key and make your way back to the clock avoiding the various little nasties. Touch the clock and you've completed the game (though you may not receive 100%).

# AM-TIPS



## STARION

These anagrams and passwords for *Starion* were sent in by Tim Dawson of Farnham Common. He did send in the entire solution but it is too much to print all in one go. So over the next couple of months the rest of the solution will be revealed.

**BLOCK 1 GRID 1**
**AD 1858: TELEGRAM** - No message for the transatlantic cable
**AD 1905: RELATIVITY** - Einstein's special theory
**AD 1985: STARION** - Be present at your birth
**AD 1980: RHODESIA** - Vanishes into Zimbabwe
**AD 1893: ASPRIN** - Herman Dresser's Headache cure
**AD 1897: DIAMOND** - Vicky's celebration lacks sparkle
**AD 1957: EEC** - Established by the treaty of Rome
**AD 1831: ELECTRICITY** - Faraday's dynamo output
**AD 0001: BIBLE** - Book for lunar xmas on Apollo 8
**GRID PASSWORD: REDBREAST**

**BLOCK 1 GRID 2**
**AD 1588: ARMADA**— Drake bowls out the Spanish
**AD 1815: WELLINGTON**— Duke gets his feet muddy at Waterloo
**AD 0814: EGBERT**— Name him king of all England
**AD 1883: KRAKATOA**— Big bang breaks Indonesian toe
**AD 1776: SEAL**— Endorse the Declaration of Independence
**AD 1587: AXE**— Get Mary ahead in Liz's chopping basket
**AD 1764: COAL**— What's fuel for James' steam engine
**AD 1086: PREFACE**— Begin the Domesday Book
**AD 1965: LEONOV**— Weightless walker
**GRID PASSWORD: SPACEWALK**

**BLOCK 1 GRID 3**
**AD 1924: HITLER**— Author of Mein Kampf
**AD 1783: BALLAST**— Weigh the first balloon
**AD 1879: LAMP**— Edison said 'Let there be light
**AD 1942: ATOM**— Fermi's doing the splits
**AD 1547: IVAN**— The Terrible Czar
**AD 1982: SPECTRUM**— Sinclair's colour baby
**AD 1901: S**— Marconi's signal across the waves
**AD 1919: TREATY**— Agreement in Versailles
**AD 1889: EIFFEL**— He towers over the World Exhibition
**GRID PASSWORD: ESTABLISH**

**BLOCK 1 GRID 4**
**AD 1953: EVEREST**— Hilary's lost his mountain
**AD 1789: CAKES**— The revolting French are hungry
**AD 1840: PENNY**— Buy the first black stamp
**AD 1983: AVON**— Thrust two without Blake's engine
**AD 1986: HALLEY**— Bill's comet
**BC 2222: UMBRELLA**— Noah's getting wet
**AD 1888: RUBBER**— Erase Dunlop's pneumatic tyre
**AD 1896: AERIAL**— Marconi's washing his radio
**AD 1565: TOBACCO**— John Hawkins is smoking
**GRID PASSWORD: PARACHUTE**

**BLOCK 1 GRID 5**
**AD 1885: PETROL**— Karl Benz's car won't start
**BC 0219: ALPS**— Hannibal's elephants are here
**AD 0982: ERIC**— Red man finds green land
**AD 2001: ODYSSEY**— A space
**AD 1949: NATO**— An organised treaty in the North Atlantic
**AD 1898: RADIUM**— Curried discovery
**AD 1959: HAWAII**— Grass skirts in the fiftieth state
**BC 0035: ASP**— Bites Cleopatra in the milky way
**AD 1895: GILLETTE**— Invents the safety razor
**GRID PASSWORD: ORPHANAGE**

## STARSTRIKE

We all know what an absolute fab game *Starstrike* is but playing it is not always that easy. So thanks to Mr R Cope of Exeter for supplying me with these valuable tips which, after a bit of practice, should help you all to get way above the million mark.

### Space:

In space on levels one and two only one ship fires at you at a time. Look at the screens very carefully, most of the ships fly in a circular path. The best way of killing a ship is to follow the same path, blasting the plasma bolts and following through by finally blasting the alien ship. The instant you destroy a ship another fires at you, so keep on the move. On the higher levels more ships fire more often and some situations are impossible to beat. If you momentarily clear the screen centre your gun marker because over a third of the ships appear from the centre. At the end of this screen one or two ships spiral out and go behind you, move your cursor to the far left or right and pick them off as they make their final pass.

### The Surface:

Here things get tough!! On level one it is best to use the tip from last month's playing tips. It also works if you move hard left or hard right, this shows the incredible graphics at their best. Pick off the laser bunkers by diving on them and spraying an arc of fire, but don't hold the fire button down too long! When you've got the towers things are a bit different. If you clear all the tower tops you get 50000 points bonus plus what ever you get for hitting the tower tops. So it's worth using up some shields to get some extra points. After you have shot all the tower tops turn your attentions back to the bunkers.

### The Trench:

This is where the main prob lems occur. Usually the cursor self centres side to side, but up and down it normally lies in one of three positions, top, middle or bottom. So it is possible to maintain your height and just concentrate on your side to side movements. In the later trenches it gets tough and a joystick is essential. Take a couple of games to learn how to get through certain catwalk formations. Don't move too violently, despite the collision detection routines it does take too much movement to get through the side to side catwalks.

### The End:

First of all when the tactical appears let go of the joystick so your cursor self centres. Then just move left to right to blow up the cubes and see one of the best graphical sequences ever.

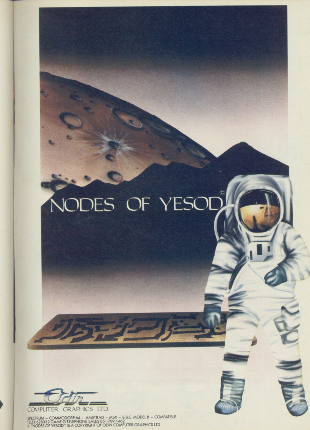
## EVERYONE'S A WALLY

Somewhere up my sleeve (probably near the top) I've got the complete solution to this game but I don't want to spoil your fun so here are just a couple of tips to keep you going until next month.

To mend the fountain get the Monkey Nuts from the Bakers using Wilma. You can now enter the Zoo, take the Monkey wrench from the Zoo and drop it somewhere convenient. Now find Dick the plumber and go find the Plunger. Get the Monkey wrench and take Dick to the fountain (making sure that he has got both the Wrench and the Plunger). Jump up on the fountain and jump at the statue on top, this should mend it. Once the fountain has been mended then get Wally, the empty bucket and the sand. Take Wally to the fountain and the bucket should fill up. Once this is done take Wally to the cement mixer and pick up the cement, find the Trowel. With the Trowel and cement go to the location with the bricks in it, walk passed them and the wall should be built.

## DRAGON TORC

Read the fab review of this game yet? If you haven't then go and read it now and drool over those ratings. For any of you that have already bought this game (and if you haven't why not?) here are a couple of advanced tips from the Hewson Consultants' supremo himself Andrew Hewson to get people started in the game. Over the next few months I will be revealing the solution to the game bit by bit so if the


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AMTIX!



## AM-TIPS

problems are just to hard to solve then watch this space.

You must befriend the Elves if you want to have a hope of completing the game. On the first level find a Bow and Arrow and using the Servant spell give it to one of the elves, you should receive a Sickle (or Scythe if you prefer) in return. With the sickle cut down the herb in one of the locations, this should give you an Energise spell. Under a slab in the first level there should be a jewel, trade this with an elf to get a message which gives a clue to what you have to do later on in the game. Also on the first level there is a missile spell in the pool this is useful in the lost vaults. Take the message to the other stone slab on the first level using the servant spell and this should open up a passageway down to the next level, the Lost Vaults. To get out of the Lost Vaults you must collect the letters X, I and T place these on top of the letter E so as to spell EXIT and that takes you to another level.

### FRANK BRUNO'S BOXING

**Andy Lowe of Stoke On Trent was the first person to officially complete *Elite*'s boxing blockbuster. Here he supplies hints on defeating boxers and their codes just in case you need any help.**

#### CANADIAN CRUSHER

The first boxer is very easy to beat just alternate between body and head punches and you should have him beaten in no time at all.

#### FLING LONG CHOP

CODE MM7IOF49B name used AND

He is the first boxer who uses a speciality move. Whenever a boxer attempts one always duck (Fling Long's speciality is a high kick). To defeat him just punch left then dodge left, punch right then dodge right and so on. With a bit of practice he is very easy to beat.

#### ANDRA PUNCHEREDOV

CODE B7XIOOLO5 name used AND

Andra's special move is a head butt, this is probably the hardest move of all the available moves to dodge. The best method to use to beat him is to punch right then duck. Repeat this process until you have knocked him to the ground 3 times.

#### TRIBAL TROUBLE

CODE FK5INOAO7 name used AND

As soon as Tribal crouches then duck or you will be flattened. The best way to defeat him is to alternate between right body and head punches.

#### FRENCHIE

CODE CE9IN9817 name used AND

Watch out for Frenchie's spinning fist punches, when the fist stops spinning then duck fast. To get the punches in lure Frenchie into putting his guard down by a quick right body punch and then get as many blows in to his head as possible.

#### RAVIOLI MAFIOSI

CODE IHCIN96A8 name used AND

Ravioli is probably the toughest boxer of the eight, it takes a lot of practice before you can defeat him. The best tactics to use are to punch alternatively to the head and then dodge. When Ravioli tries his speciality then dodge and try to get a right head punch in.

#### ANTIPODEAN ANDY

CODE ML6ION4B6 name used AND

He is probably one of the easiest boxers to overcome. Just keep throwing in those right head punches (not forgetting to duck is speciality) and after a while you will win.

#### PETER PERFECT

CODE BFAINN2L5 name used AND

Pete hasn't got a speciality but he is so good that he doesn't really need one! When Pete's guard is up then lure it down in the same way used to defeat Frenchie but Pete will rarely let your KO punches land home. To hit him with a KO punch (should you be fortunate to get as far as that) hit him with a body blow and then use the KO punch.

To see the final effect enter the code CGAINA5CA and use the name AND.

### ROCKY HORROR SHOW

The Amstrad version of this game is probably the best out of the three conversions and thanks to Martin Stokes of Solihull who sent in these tips to help you complete the game. Has anyone seen the CBM version? It is enough to make you feel sorry for them.

Around the house you will find many keys, these keys open any door. Also you will find small flashing brick-like things which are parts of the De-Medusa machine. With one of these bricks go to the room with a big curtain in it and walk up to the curtain. The curtain will now rise and reveal the De-Medusa machine and your friend. Place the part you have collected onto the De-Medusa machine and then go and look for another piece.

Whenever the temperature gauge reaches 0, Eddie the mad biker thaws out and proceeds to race around the house and occasionally knocks you down. The way to remedy this is to get to the freezer room and press the flashing box. The only problem is getting there. Go to the top floor and into the room with the energy. Now climb up the ladder and press the button at the top — you will have to pass the energy beam quickly while it is switched off otherwise you will be killed. Go left through Frank n' Furter's laboratory and then through the next room as well. You will then be in the freezer room. A quick way to escape from here is to go back into the next room and press the button that says 'Don't Press this' twice — this will transport you back to a room on the ground floor.

When you bump into characters they will say lines from the film but other than that they rarely harm you, but sometimes they take your clothes which you will get back when you collect the object that looks like a brain. Beware of the butler, Riff Raff, because he fires lasers at you when you are on screen.

### DUN DARACH

These tips were compiled with the help of Michael Mitchell, Gary Macintosh both of Morayshire, Keith Walker of Birmingham, Kevin Penton of Horninglow, Craig Rogers of Hayes and . . . myself. They follow on from the first few snippets of information given away in issue 0 so if you don't have a copy of that it is possible to order one through the back numbers service.

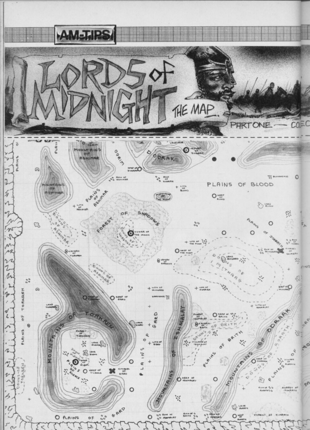
Buy a Mole skin from the skinner and give this to Bren in return for a map. Now earn enough money to buy the Platinum and give this to Bren for another map and the message 'Galacia is far'. Give this map to Ryde in return for the shield Belinus. Take this to the Hail Belinus room and drop on the table in there in return for a clue.

To gain as much money as you wish go to the gambling houses in lomain. Now drop all your money on table B and press 6 to return to the menu. Save the game then return back to where you were. Keep gambling and saving the game when you win and reloading a saved game when you lose. This way you can easily build up enough money to purchase anything you want.

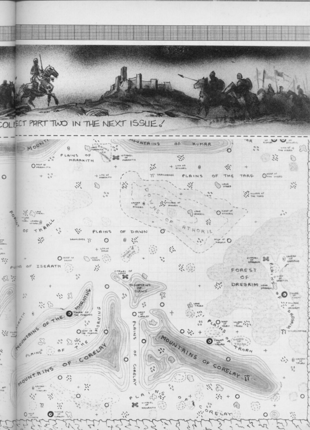
To speed up the interest rate, bank some of your money and then carry out some of the other tips while it is day (signified by the torches being out) — press 6 and then 1. This will take you to the menu and then back into the game. When you re-enter the game the torches will flicker on and you will collect interest for the whole day. Using this method it is possible to get your 1% interest twice a day.

**That seems to be all the information that I'm giving away this month so watch out for the next issue which promises to be even bigger! As you may have gathered we are rather keen on maps so send any ones you've got along with your tips to the address below:**
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DODRAK
TOWER OF DODRAK
KEEP OF DODRAK
PLAINS OF BLOOD
MOUNTAINS OF ASHIMAR
PLAINS OF ASHIMAR
LITH OF ASHIMAR
LITH OF BLOOD
KEEP OF BLOOD
LAKE BLOOD
DOWNS OF ASHIMAR
FOREST OF SHADOWS
TOWER OF THE MOON
DOWNS OF SHADOWS
PLAINS OF ISERATH
LITH OF THE MOON
KEEP OF THE MOON
CAVERN OF TORKREN
CAVERN OF SHADOWS
DOWNS OF MITHARG
LAKE MITHARG
DOWNS OF ASHIMAR
LITH OF MITHARG
LITH OF DODRAK
KEEP OF MITHARG
KEEP OF TORKREN
KEEP OF GARD
LAKE TORKREN
PLAINS OF TORKREN
MOUNTAINS OF TORKREN
LAKE GARD
PLAINS OF GARD
MOUNTAINS OF ISHMALAY
FOREST OF ISHMALAY
KEEP OF BRITH
DOWNS OF BRITH
LITH OF ISHMALAY
MOUNTAINS OF DODRAK
FOREST OF TORKREN
LITH OF GARD
VILLAGE OF ISHMALAY
PLAINS OF BRITH
DOWNS OF TORKREN
PLAINS OF SILENCE
KEEP OF SILENCE
CITADEL OF GARD
KEEP OF ISHMALAY
KEEP OF DODRAK
FOREST OF TIMARTH
LAKE AVARTH
PLAINS OF GARD



COLLECT PART TWO IN THE NEXT ISSUE!
MOUNTAINS OF KUMAR
PLAINS OF MARAKITH
PLAINS OF THE TARG
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OF THRALL
PLAINS OF DAWN
PLAINS OF ISERATH
FOREST OF DREBRIM
MOUNTAINS OF DAWN
MOUNTAINS OF THE MORNING
PLAINS OF THE MORNING
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# WORLD CUP SOCCER

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We've taken ten questions from the Factfile Quiz and if you fancy winning one of the fifty copies of the World Cup Soccer package that are up for grabs, or indeed one of the two VIP tickets to a Tottenham Game — get your thinking caps on! We'll be making the draw on 14th November, so get those entries in to

***AMTIX FOOTY COMP, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB***

### The Questions

1) Who won the World Cup in 1970? a) England, b) Brazil, c) Uruguay, d) Haiti, e) Columbia?

2) Who won the World Cup in 1982? a) Cameroon, b) Peru, c) Belgium, d) East Germany, e) Italy

3) In which city was the 1982 final played a) Mexico City, b) Madrid, c) Paris, d) Munich, e) Buenos Aires

4) In which city was the 1970 final played a) Mexico, b) Paris, c) Madrid, d) Munich, e) Rome

5) Which country hosted the 1974 World Cup a) West Germany, b) Columbia, c) Argentina, d) USA, e) Spain

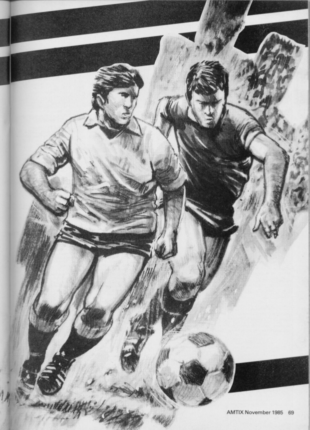
6) Which country hosted the 1978 World Cup a) Argentina, b) Cameroons, c) Iran, d) Zaire, e) Rumania

7) Who came second in 1970 a) West Germany, b) Australia, c) Turkey, d) Cuba, e) Italy

8) Who came second in 1982 a) West Germany, b) Kuwait, c) El Salvador, d) Cuba, e) Portugal

9) Who came third in 1974 a) Iran, b) El Salvador, c) Poland, d) Uruguay, e) Scotland

10) Who came third in 1978 a) East Germany, b)Italy, c) Germany, d) Honduras, e) Brazil



# PUTTING IT ALL ON DISK

**Now that having a disk drive and an Amstrad connected to one another is no longer a rarity, a number of packages have appeared for transferring your tape programs to disk. Two such utilities have reached AMTIX! Towers, and in between drinking tea made for him by the people who really do the work around here, GARY LIDDON put *Discovery* from Siren Software and *Transmat* from Pride Utilities to the test.**

The fundamental aim of both packages is to transfer software from the relatively sluggish datacorder onto disk. They're certainly a useful tool for pirates and I might as well say now that neither AMTIX! nor myself condone piracy. Anyway with that little statement out of the way I can now begin.

The two packages perform similar functions in similar ways. Each reads a block of tape and saves, block at a time, onto disk. Both are intelligent in their capability to save out only with legal filenames, converting those on tape that would cause problems into something a bit more palatable for Amsdos.




*Discovery* from Siren is presented via a menu system. There are four options — Tape to Disk, Full Catalogue, Catalogue and CP/M. Tape to disk is fairly self explanatory, the program giving prompts along the way. There are two modes for transfer programs with, Auto or Manual. In **Auto** mode the computer supplies its own disk compatible filenames and add a relocator to any program trying to write over the extra memory stolen by Amsdos. In **Manual** mode you are given the option of whether you want a relocator added and you may also supply your own file names. While the program is transfering, *Discovery* keeps you informed about file lengths and execution addresses.

The **Full Catalogue** option displays a directory of the drive you're working on, giving information on the file type, where the program sits in memory and the execution address. The **Catalogue** function simply dumps a normal directory to screen. **CP/M** is the same as cpm in BASIC and puts you into the CP/M environment as long as the system tracks are present.

*Transmat* from Pride Utilities offers similar capabilities. Instead of a menu an environment is set up looking similar to CP/M. To transfer programs to disk you use the command **TRANS1**. TRANS performs exactly the same task as *Discovery*'s option 1. Typing **TRANS 1** sets up the program ready to receive one file of tape to transfer to disk. If you don't know how many files make up the program you want to transfer, then **TRANS 0** keeps on copying until you press ESCAPE. As with *Discovery*, *Transmat* allows you to choose your own filenames and add a relocator program and you have to decide on these as the programs load. Similarly, there is an auto mode but it does not relocate programs automatically.

The **INFO** command gives an informative directory of the disk. Regrettably, unlike *Discovery*, the execution address is left out although you can direct the readings to a printer. Other commands have been included for disk handling and are quite useful, though nothing new is included as they're all accessible from BASIC. Funnily enough both packages include instructions for transfering a few old games, showing how to solve problems you may come across.

One minor detraction with *Transmat* is its inability to work with some extension ROMs added. When I first tried to run the utility, an error message appeared. After unplugging some ROMs the program soon worked. A nice feature, however, is *Transmat*'s willingess to allow you to make a copy to disk. With *Discovery* you're stuck with a tape version, both programs refusing to transfer it.

A serious drawback common to both utilities is the amount of programs they can't transfer. Several new loading systems are totally oblivious to any attempt to make a disk backup. These are usually of the fast loader type. More and more companies are using fast load systems to try and defeat the pirate, but in so doing, they are also stopping the honest user from making disk back ups. Despite this sour note, the majority of programs can be transferred, since most of them use Amstrad's built in tape format.

All in all two very good utilities, both achieving what they set out to do. Both transfer the same sorts of files and offer similar functions but, of the two I found *Discovery* just a bit easier to use. An added plus that comes with it is the problem sheet Siren are compiling for transferring problem programs. *Transmat* is still very good but its presentation just takes the edge off it. In terms of costing there's no difference, both weighing in at very similar prices. No disk user with any sort of cassette software library should really be without either one or the other.

**Siren Software, 76 Bridge Street, Manchester M3 2RJ**
**Tel: 061-796 6874**
**DISCOVERY: £7.95 cass, £11.95 disk (for 464/664/6128)**

**Pride Utilities, 7 Charlton Heights, Luton, Beds LU4 9UF**
**Tel: 0582 411686 (9-10am only)**
**TRANSMAT: £7.95 cass, £11.95 disk (for 464/664/6128)**

# FILE MANAGER

### No Man's Land, £12.95 cass

This is an unusual piece of software for two reasons; firstly it's from a French software publisher, No Man's Land. They used to specialise in Oric software, but have since moved on to better things. The second feature of this data base is the way it is laid out. Most of the important commands are given via icons at the top of the screen. They, in turn cause further options or prompts to be printed in a window on the left.

After loading you are presented with the main display. On the top line there are a number of icons that allow the user to select such operations as sort, type, copy and stop. The window on the left hand side is used for writing prompts and options. When the program has loaded you have to answer the question that appears in the bottom of the window so the program knows if it can use a printer or not.

To start using the program you need to select one of the icons using the cursor keys, each of the icons flash in turn as you move over it. To open a new file you must select the key symbol. After pressing Return, a message scrolls up on the prompts window asking if you want to open a new file or load one from tape. Your decision dictates which option list scrolls up next.

A file can have a name of up to 35 characters long, that's almost a file in its own right. Once named, the next task is to design the layout. Select the items icon and press return. A large box that occupies most of the screen then fills up with a list of the twenty available fields. A field is a heading for each section of information that you want to store within one of the records. For example, a phone list file will consist of a series of records, one for each person. Each record will be made up of fields perhaps called NAME, STREET, TOWN and PHONE NUMBER. The window on the left explains how to name each field, and as you do so, the information that you type in is shown on the bottom line and then transferred to the main window alongside the field number when you press Return. In each field a name can be up to 20 characters long.

When you have finished naming each field you return to the main menu and select the TYPE option. This allows you to enter the data to be held on each field. If field number one is to contain the name of a person then you must put **1** as the first character in the data entry line. To make the data entry a little easier on the fingers, the function keys have been programmed to place a number followed by a space on the bottom line, ready for you to enter the data. There is an option accessed via the camera icon that allows you to duplicate records that are similar to one another. Once you have constructed your file, the next operation is to save it out to tape — once or twice.

*File Manager* allows for some fairly comprehensive search and sort facilities. The simple search allows you to search a file for the occurance of a word, or series of letters within a word. If you looked for the word 'GAS' then every record containing those three letters is announced. You can of course confine the search to whole words only. If




The icon-driven top line sits above File Manager's opening screen.



you know the number of the record that you want to examine then you can call for it by entering its number. The final search option allows you to search a file according to a number of criteria. Your could, for example, look through a file for a person called Evans who lived in Durham.

Records can be changed by going from search to modify. The instructions for using the modify section appear in the window on the left. Again a number of possibilities are offered — after selecting the record you can edit the field by entering its field number. New fields can be inserted and old unwanted ones deleted.

The way this package is presented is really quite novel. The icons are used well but please don't even begin to think that we are dealing with a GEM type system, its a long way short of that. The general layout of the screen is good. The windows work very well, they keep the display uncluttered while at the same time providing information that helps those users who do not actually use the program frequently and so are prone to forget how to operate it. Some of the prompts presented in the window can be a little confusing but a quick reference to the documentation should put you straight. The capacity of the database is not, by any means, large. Each record can only hold 240 characters. The program does not allow you to use any character within a field, commas, for example, encourage the uniquitous message 'Redo from start ?'. The search commands are very comprehensive but their biggest advantage is their ease of use. The sort facility is easy to use but nowhere nearly as useful, not only does it lack speed but it also lacks flexibility. While you are able to sort records based on two criteria, numeric and alphabetic, you have no choice in the direction of the sort; one should be able to select an alphabetic sort in reverse order for example. The last problem with the sort is that you are unable to save a file in a sorted state, if you want to look at the contents again, some other time, you must perform that sort again.

On the whole I would say that this package would be ideal for the simpler tasks, perhaps keeping a file of a record or books collection together with such details as the artist or author. The layout makes it easy to use except that the program could have prompted for the input data by printing the name of the field, rather than expecting the user to have to type in the field number every time. On the whole the program lacks real power. But, to be fair, very few people would even consider a tape based system for serious work. But if you are bound by tapes and your demands are not too great then this program is quite good value for money.

**Jeremy Spencer**

*GARY LIDDON hops to the hip beat of hex code with the ZEDIS Editor Disassembler from Pride Utilities in . . .*

# WIPING AWAY THOSE OLD DORIS DAY BLUES

*Zedis* Z80 Editor and Disassembler is a machine code tool aimed at those funky enough to be streetwise when it comes to the intricacies of Z80 code. *Zedis* is an attempt to provide a monitor package useful in debugging and running your own Z80 code. Machine code is hip these days, and if you want to bop to the beat with the big guys you're going to need a loud ghetto blaster and wise up to the ways of Zilog. A monitor is a program that allows the end user to edit and display memory in a user-friendly way. Usually included in the monitor is a section of program that allows you to execute machine code programs and stop them at convenient points. This is very helpful when dealing with machine language since, unlike good old Doris Day BASIC, it has a mind of its own. If the program is busy doing something, there's no way you can stop it to regain control. It's no good hitting that old ESCAPE key a couple of times, you'll just have to reset the computer and lose memory. This makes the testing and debugging of programs very awkward indeed. Now when it comes to testing a program for the first time you can be damn near 100% certain that something is going to be wrong with it, and if there is and the program crashes, most times there's nothing you can do except reset the machine. But with a monitor on line your hipness rating is really beginning to hip, because it's possible to stop the program at regular intervals to see what exactly is going on by looking at the computer's internal registers. The monitor's overall aim is to provide a better environment for testing machine code than that provided by Doris Day.

*Zedis* is such a tool, replete with exciting functions like memory manipulation and program execution commands. The program is laid out in series of three windows, each scrolling its own information. One window handily contains a complete list of the program's capabilities for quick and easy reference. Of the other two, one handles your input and the other prints the program's output. Either window can be used for either task since their functions can be changed with ease.

Here, it's worth noting that *Zedis* expects you to be funky with hex. If you're going to leap onto the back of your neck and spin your legs in the air comewise, then that old continental base 10 stuff isn't going to work. *Zedis* just has this inability to understand anything but hexadecimal. Hex, as it's more commonly known, is a numbering system that works well when using code because of its links with base 2, the number system the computer uses internally. For programming it's fine, but if you're only used to decimal it can be a bit weirdo at first.

Once loaded the option probably most immediately helpful is the disassembler. The disassembler lets you convert a string of meaningless bytes held in memory to slightly more meaningful Z80 mnemonics. To disassemble some code you first need to set a variable called ADDR. Type A and then the start address of your code to set the start point, then press RETURN and the code disassembles into the output window. You can move up and down the disassembly using the cursor keys to step 9 instructions at a time.

Altering a program is easily achieved using the memory editor commands. The most simple command I allows you to input data in a hex string. First you set the ADDR variable then type I followed by the numbers you want to input. F finds the occurrence of a byte or word after the address set in ADDR. Once the bytes you want are found, pressing a key will abort the search. If instead you want *Zedis* to search through a heap of bytes for an ASCII string instead, then you put your string in quotes after the I command. One facility that can be extremely useful is a command for listing out blocks of memory, but here *Zedis* proves to be a bit un-hip in failing to offer one. Every other monitor I've seen has an option that lists memory in hex, ASCII and decimal.

For getting your progs in and out of the computer, a full save and load facility is included even allowing the loading of data at a specific memory location. If you just leave out the load address then the program defaults to the address the file was saved from. Save can be used to save out a specific memory block.

When you tire of the funky street action hex and long for some soothing Doris Day sounds, the B command gives you back BASIC but it also wipes memory so be wise and save out what you've been working on first.

The *Zedis* editor/disassembler contains functions I'd expect to see on any decent monitor but lacks quite a few fundamental and essential options. Definitely worthwhile would have been a memory dump option; using *Zedis* is like having a basic POKE command but no complementary PEEK function. A primitive assembler allowing simple programs to be entered would have been extremely useful and, though being standard on many other monitors, on *Zedis* it is sadly lacking. Hexadecimal is a neat numbering system though access to decimal is very important even if Pride Utilities don't seem to agree.

Overall a rather shoddy package with, I suspect, major chunks of it written in BASIC. Minus so many vital functions that are standard on nearly every other monitor, *Zedis* proves to be a real pain to use. I'm afraid that compared to other people's wares, both pricewise and programwise, *Zedis* just doesn't hit it hot on the streets.




# THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHTPEN BRIGADE

**In the days of the ikons and mice the lightpen seems to be as much in vogue as a slide ruler, and yet no less than four different companies are trying to lure Amstrad users to a purchase. Will the moths be attracted by the bright glow of the lightpen?**

Certainly the cost of a lightpen is less than half of any existing mouse, but is it a viable alternative? Lightpens do not offer an acceptable level of precision for pixel accurate freehand drawing, in fact of the four lightpens reviewed, only the **Dart** version showed any sign of coming close to providing a jitterfree pen movement and location thanks to its optical fibre system, which guarantees a more unidirectional reception of the electron light beam on the screen. Although initially intriguing, the use of the lightpen as a cursor positioning device becomes tedious as it is ergonomically a disaster having to work over a period of time on a vertical luminous curved glass screen positioned at a distance behind the keyboard, which usually also denies the steadying support of an artist's elbow. And yet with the lack of an affordable mouse, the lightpen only has to vie with the dreaded cursor keys, and given that the lightpen drawing utility provides reasonable support for line, rectangle, circle and other useful geometrical shapes and functions, the below-par freehand facility is soon forgotten . . .

All programs operate on a lightpen menu option principle, which means pointing the lightpen to a selection box on the screen and pressing the designated trigger key (The **Amstrad LP-1** triggers automatically when the lightpen hits a box). Nearly none of the lightpens tested are able to position the cursor on a totally dark screen area as the light sensor requires some contrast to pick up the electron beam of the monitor. The exception is the Amstrad LP-1, which works with a software generated bright white search band running across the screen from left to right at the height of the lightpen position and therefore provides the lightpen with an easily detectable light source. Although this kills the dark area reading problem, it creates such a tedious delay that frustration can set in when drawing or banding lines. The other lightpens require working with lighter shades of paper colour which can be altered after the drawing has been set.

All the programs allow the user to accurately reposition the cursor set by the lightpen with the cursor keys — a must for pixel accurate operation.

**FRANCO FREY is the sort of person who takes safety pins apart to see how they work, but today, he turns his attention to four lightpens . . .**



## AMSTRAD LIGHTPEN LP-1

**COST: £19.95 cass**

**PACKAGE:** Lightpen with in built light sensor, cable with 9-pin D connector which plugs into joystick port, graphics package provided on cassette, 12-page leaflet with user instructions. Lightpen does not require hardware interface.

**PROGRAM STRUCTURE:** Opening menu with four options: Screen instructions, screen designer mode 0 (16 pens), screen designer mode 1 (4 pens) and NIM game. Screen designer contains two drawing function main menus.

**CURSOR POSITIONING TECHNIQUE:** Pressing space bar a band appears at the height of the lightpen position and moves across the screen until it meets the lightsensor.

**CALIBRATION:** None.

**FUNCTIONS:**

**CHANGE PEN:**
**CHANGE INK:**
**BOX:** requires positioning of two diagonal reference points.
**CIRCLE:** prompts for centre and circumference point.
**HAND DRAW:** Draws while holding down the space bar.
**DRAW LINE:**
**BANDING:** successive drawing of lines.
**RAYS:** provides line drawing from fixed reference point.
**TRIANGLE:** requires three corner points positioning.
**TEXT:** allows insertion of text on screen at desired location. Only normal horizontal reading text catered for.
**COPY:** copies area (rectangle shape) of screen to another position. Requires defining of diagonals of copy area and locating of new position. The copy area cannot be dragged to new position, it is copied after commitment.
**MAG. FACTOR:** sets the magnification factor for the copy function.
**NEW SCREEN:** clears the screen to the current paper colour.
**PAPER:** sets the paper colour on a new screen.
**ZOOM:** zooms in on an area of the screen designated by a rectangle which has to be positioned with the lightpen. The zoom factor cannot be altered. This function allows accurate pixel work to be carried out.
**PRINTER:** provides screen dumps to the Amstrad DMP-1 printer. Other printers are not catered for.
**SAVE:** to tape or disk.
**LOAD:** from tape or disk.
**RETURN:** returns to the opening menu.

**DISK OPTION:** The program can be converted to disk operation.

**PROGRAMMING APPLICATION:** No instructions provided except location of load and save routines for screens. Subroutines may be lifted from Basic listing.

### FOR:
- Low cost
- Dark area positioning thanks to travelling band

### AGAINST:
- Tedious travelling band routine creates delays and ruins the drawing fun
- Limited amount of special drawing functions

## DART ELECTRONICS LIGHTPEN

**COST: £39.95 cass**

**PACKAGE:** Lightpen interface connects to expansion port. The monitor to computer connection is intercepted by the interface - the monitor DIN plug connects to interface socket and the interface DIN plug makes the final connection to the computer. A sensitivity control allows adjustment for green screen monitors. The lightpen is permanently connected to the interface via an optical cable. Graphics package provided on cassette together with a six page leaflet for instructions.

**PROGRAM STRUCTURE:** One menu screen called up via M key. Escape to return to drawing. Apart from selecting major options via lightpen, functions are activated with dedicated keys: D for draw, P for plot, F for fill, U for unfill, E for elastic line, box or circle, DEL for erasing area around the cursor, B for border colour selection and shift combined with CLR for clearing the screen.

**CURSOR POSITIONING:** Cursor point appears on screen area pointed to by lightpen. Elastic lines, boxes and circles are displayed prior to commitment. Text and sprites may be dragged across the screen for placement.

**CALIBRATION:** The position of the cursor pixel relative to the pen can be adjusted at any time via the cursor keys. Sensitivity control on interface provides adjustment for use with green screen monitor.

**FUNCTIONS:**

**SELECT SCREEN MODE:** mode 0, 1 and 2.
**SELECT PEN:** up to 15 (depending on selected mode) pens, which can be filled with any of 27 ink colours.
**SETTING INK COLOURS:**
**SELECT LINE TYPE:** different brush widths, spray can and quill effect pen.
**SELECT ELASTIC LINE:** Elastic line, box or circle. All these functions provide elastic display prior to commitment.
**SAVE/LOAD SCREENS:** to and from tape or disk.
**TEXT INSERTIONS:** up to a maximum of 16 characters may be entered at a time and dragged around the screen for placement. Pressing ENTER will copy them onto the screen leaving the overlay to be dragged again for further copying.
**SPRITES:** upon selection the sprites create screen is displayed. Pressing D plots, pressing DEL unplots pixels. Pens may be changed by placing lightpen next to pen number. CLR clears the sprite area, ESC aborts the creation and ENTER returns to the drawing screen with the sprite. The sprite may be dragged across the screen area and copied repeatedly. Escape to return to normal drawing mode.
**DISK CAT:** displays disk catalog.

**DISK OPTION:** Screens may be stored on disk.

**PROGRAMMING APPLICATION:** Instructions provided for x-y location and screen handling without resident lightpen software.

### FOR:
- Excellent pen positioning accuracy
- Best freehand drawing results
- Superb cursor calibration
- Handy elastic line, box and circle facility
- Good sprite function for texture filling or local copy work

### AGAINST:
- Optical fibre gets tangled at the rear of the computer due to bad positioning
- Interface shape causes insufficient insertion into expansion slot on CPC664
- No magnification or zooming
- Limited drawing functions

## DK'TRONICS GRAPHICS LIGHTPEN

**COST: £24.95 cass**

**PACKAGE:** The lightpen interface plugs into the disk port. If required the disk drive interface can be connected via the extension connector. The lightpen plugs into the interface jack socket. The graphics package is provided on cassette and a 32 page manual accompanies the hard- and software.

**CURSOR POSITIONING TECHNIQUE:** The program displays a cursor cross under the lightpen. In drawing mode pressing a cursor key activates the 'nudge' feature to position the cursor initially set with the lightpen to the required pixel position. With menu selection a set of white brackets appear around the ikon, whereupon pressing ENTER will select the required option.

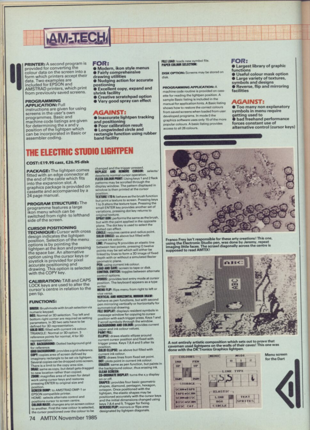
**CALIBRATION:** Calibrate Lightpen is a menu option. Upon selection a target will appear under the lightpen. The contrast of the monitor can be adjusted for best tracking results and the relative position in respect to the lightpen adjusted with the cursor keys, although the correction is over-sensitive and overshoot occurs. The new adjustment may be recorded by pressing ENTER.

**PROGRAM STRUCTURE:** 5 main menus can be accessed via NEXT option. ESC from drawing screen returns menu after operation. ESC during menu returns previous menu. 3 further option menus for copy, text and scratchpad handling are provided.

**FUNCTIONS:**

**LOAD AND SAVE SCREEN:** from and to tape or disk.
**CLEAR SCREEN:** to white background.
**CALIBRATE LIGHTPEN:** using cursor keys.
**DRAW MODE:** Pressing enter plots, pressing space bar draws a line in the current pencil size.
**FILL MODE:** Escape cancels the fill routine.
**SELECT INK.COLOUR/TONE:** Upon selection a paintbox is displayed for selection of the current colour.
**SELECT PENCIL TEXTURE AND SIZE:** A menu of pencil sizes and a spray can appears.
**RUBBER BANDS:** This routine provides the programming of a sequence of lines (a rubber band around 20 drawing pins). Pressing COPY allows the movement of the cursor, releasing COPY fixes the drawing pin which can be further nudged. OUTLINE RUBBER **BAND:** initiates copy sequence.
**OUTLINE RUBBER BAND:** initiates rubber band drawing in current pen setting and colour.
**SELECT INK COLOUR/TONE:**
**SELECT PENCIL TEXTURE AND SIZE:**
**DRAW CIRCLES:** Uses the rubber band routine for setting centre and circumference. Partly off the screen circles are not drawn
**DRAW RECTANGLES:** Uses rubber band routine with two diagonal drawing pins.
**COPY, SHRINK AND EXPAND:** Coloured brackets appear which can be set via the cursor keys, enlarged or reduced via the CONTROL or SHIFT CURSOR keys and set via COPY to represent the copy area. Pressing DEL generates a second set of movable brackets for the destination area. Once set pressing ENTER will copy area in the first brackets into second brackets. Enlarging and reducing is similar except that before pressing ENTER for the copy select scaling factor 1 to 4 for enlargement or reduction.
**ENTERING TEXT:** A block cursor appears for positioning text and may be moved around with the lightpen by pressing COPY. Horizontal and vertical text is catered for.
**SCRATCHPAD:** This feature is a magnification of the screen area pointed to by the lightpen so that accurate pixel work can be carried out. Only one magnification factor is available. The section of the screen is blown up to size for detail work. At the bottom of the screen is a band containing the current ink colour. Pressing 1 to 0 selects the colour. CLR is a special transparent colour (shown as vertical bars) which will not upset the existing screen picture over which the scratchpad is transposed. Once the scratchpad is completed, it may be copied to screen as many times as desired.

**DISK OPTION:** The graphics package may be stored to disk. Full instructions are given. Screens may be saved and loaded from disk.






**PRINTER:** A second program is provided for converting the colour data on the screen into a form which printers accept their data. Two examples are included for EPSON and AMSTRAD printers, which print from previously saved screens.

**PROGRAMMING APPLICATION:** Full instructions are given for using screens in the user's own programmes. Basic and machine code listings are given for determining the x and y position of the lightpen which can be incorporated in Basic or assembler coding.

## FOR:

- Modern, ikon style menus
- Fairly comprehensive drawing utilities
- Nudging action for accurate postioning
- Excellent copy, expand and shrink facility
- Creative scratchpad option
- Very good spray can effect

## AGAINST:

- Inaccurate lightpen tracking and positioning
- Poor calibration result
- Longwinded circle and rectangle function using rubber band facility

**FILE LOAD:** loads new symbol file.
**PAPER COLOUR SELECTION:**

**DISK OPTION:** Screens may be stored on disk.

**PROGRAMMING APPLICATION:** A machine code routine is provided on cassette for reading the lightpen position. A sample Basic listing is included in the manual for application hints. A Basic listing shows how to restore the correct colours from saved screens when loaded from user developed programs. In mode 0 the graphics software uses only 15 of the more popular colours. A basic listing provides access to all 26 colours.

## FOR:

- Largest library of graphic functions
- Useful colour mask option
- Large variety of textures, symbols and designs
- Reverse, flip and mirroring facilities

## AGAINST:

- Too many non explanatory symbols in menu require getting used to
- bad freehand performance forces constant use of alternative control (cursor keys)

# THE ELECTRIC STUDIO LIGHTPEN

**COST: £19.95 cass, £26.95 disk**

**PACKAGE:** The lightpen comes fitted with an edge connector at the end of the cable which fits into the expansion slot. A graphics package is provided on cassette and accompanied by a 24 page manual.

**PROGRAM STRUCTURE:** The programme features a large ikon menu which can be switched from right- to lefthand side of the screen.

**CURSOR POSITIONING TECHNIQUE:** Cursor with cross design indicates the lightpen position. Selection of the menu options is by pointing the lightpen at the ikon and pressing the space bar. An alternative option using the cursor keys or joystick is provided for pixel accurate positioning and drawing. This option is selected with the COPY key.

**CALIBRATION:** TAB and CAPS LOCK keys are used to alter the cursor's centre in relation to the pen tip.

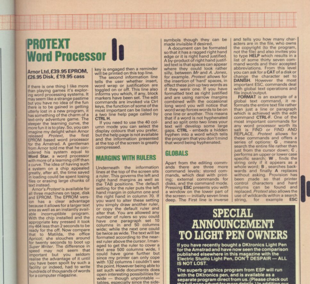
## FUNCTIONS:

**BRUSH:** Brushmode with brush selection via numeric keypad.
**BOX:** Normal or 3D selection. Top left and bottom right corner are required as setting parameters. In 3D two sets have to be defined for 3D representation.
**SOLID BOX:** filled with current ink colour.
TRIANGLE: Normal or 3D option. 3 reference points for normal, 4 for 3D representation.
**REF. BACKGROUND:** Dotted background grid for reference.
**GRID BACKGROUND:** provides a grid reference.
**COPY:** copies area of screen defined by imaginary rectangle to be set via lightpen. Several copies can be dropped onto screen. There is a limit to the copy area size.
**DRAG:** same as copy, but detail gets dragged to new location rather than copied.
**ZOOM:** maginfies area of screen for detail work using cursor keys and restores pressing ENTER to original size and position.
**SCREEN DUMP:** to AMSTRAD DMP-1 or EPSON compatible printer.
HOME: selects alternate control and positions cursor to screen centre.
**COLOUR MASK:** changes any on screen colour to another. First the new colour is selected, the cursor positioned over the colour to be changed and the trigger pressed.
**REPLACE AND REMOVE CURSOR:** selects/deselects normal cursor operation.
**FLECK COLOUR PRINT:** Using keys 1 and 2 fleck patterns may be scrolled through the display window. The pattern displayed in window is then printed at the cursor position.
**TEXTURE 1 TO 4:** behave as the brush function but print a texture to screen. Pressing keys 1 to 9 alters the texture type. Pressing the small ENTER key provides another set of variations, pressing dot key returns to original texture.
**SPRAY GUN:** performs the same as the brush, but with the paint applied in the opposite plane. The dot key is used to select the dotted can effect.
**CIRCLE:** requires centre and radius point.
**SOLID CIRCLE:** as above but filled with current ink colour.
**LINE:** Pressing N provides an elastic line between two points, pressing Q twelve points may be set which will either be linked by lines to form a 3D image of fixed depth with or without a simulated Bezier geometric plane.
**PEN:** using current ink colour.
**LOAD AND SAVE:** screen to tape or disk.
**CONTROL SWITCH:** toggles between alternate control options.
**WORDS:** provides text entry mode at cursor position. The keyboard appears as a type writer.
**MENU FLIP:** flips menu from right to left or vice versa.
**VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL MIRROR DRAW:** behave as pen functions, but with second pen mirroring vertically or horizontally for symmetrical drawing.
**FILE DISPLAY:** displays resident symbols in message window for copying to cursor position with each trigger press. Keys 1 and 2 scroll symbols through the window.
**BACKGROUND AND COLOUR:** provides current paper and ink colour values.
**PAINT FILL:**
**ELLIPSE:** draws elastic ellipse around current cursor position and fixed with trigger press. Keys 7,8,4 and 5 alter its position.
**SOLID ELLIPSE:** as above but filled with current ink colour.
**RAYS:** draws lines from fixed set point.
**DOT:** plots point in current ink colour.
**ERASER:** same as pen function, but paints in the background colour, thus erasing ink.
**CLEAR SCREEN:**
**CO-ORDINATE DISPLAY:** turns the x,y display on or off.
**SHAPES:** provides four basic geometric shapes, diamond, pentagon, hexagon, octagon. Once positioned with the lightpen, the elastic shapes may be positioned accurately with the cursor keys and the initial dimensions changed using keys 7,8,4 and 5. Trigger for fixing.
**REVERSE/FLIP:** mirrors or flips area designated by lightpen diagonals.

Franco Frey isn't responsible for these arty creations! This one, using the Electronic Studio pen, was done by Jeremy, repeat imaging little faces. The scrawl diagonally across the centre is supposed to read AMTIX!

A not entirely artistic composition which sets out to prove that cavemen used lightpens on the walls of their caves! This one was done with the DK'Tronics Graphics lightpen.

Menu screen for the Dart



# PROTEXT Word Processor

**Arnor Ltd, £39.95 EPROM, £26.95 Disk, £19.95 cass**

If there is one thing I like more than playing games it's exploring word processing systems. It may seem like a strange pastime but you have no idea of the fun there is to be gained in getting utterly lost in a new program, it has something of the charm of a text-only adventure game. The steeper the learning curve, the more fun it is to play. So, you can imagine my delight when Arnor released *Protext*, the first EPROM based word processor for the Amstrad. A gentleman from Arnor told me that he considered his system equal to **Word Star**, a word processor with more of a learning cliff than a curve. The idea of having such a system on a chip appealed greatly, after all, the time saved in loading could be spent losing files or erasing large chunks of text instead.

Arnor's *Protext* is available for all three machines on tape, disk and EPROM. The EPROM version has a clear advantage because it allows for a larger text area as well as an instantly available incorruptible program. With the chip installed and the appropriate key pressed it took my 464 less than 2 seconds to be ready for the off. Now compare that to Matilda, the office Apricot; she slouches around for twenty seconds to boot up *Super Writer*. The difference in speed may not seem that important but you seldom realise the advantage of it until you have been spoilt by such a facility or indeed, had to write hundreds of thousands of words for a computer magazine.

## GETTING STARTED

Once the program has loaded the user is immediately taken into the editing mode. The top two lines of the screen are occupied by two inverse lines that give information about the state of the editor. *Protext* can operate in either 40 column mode, for the rich chaps with the colour monitors; or in 80 column mode, for the professionals. Having two display modes demands that the program displays the essential information at the top of the screen in a sensible way. In 80 column mode the top line tells the user the name of the file that has been loaded in (since a file is not named until it is saved). The top line also tells the user the current page, line and column position of the cursor; as well as the number of free bytes available for text. If the CAPS LOCK key is engaged then a reminder will be printed on this top line.

The second information line tells the user whether insert, word wrap or justification are toggled on or off. This line also informs you which, if any, block markers have been set. The edit commands are invoked via Ctrl keys, the function of some of the most important can be listed on a two line help page called by **CTRL H**.

If you need to use the 40 column mode you can select the display colours that you prefer, but the help page is not available and the information presented at the top of the screen is greatly compressed.

## MARGINS WITH RULERS

Underneath the information lines at the top of the screen sits a ruler. This governs the left and right hand margins as well as the TAB positions. The default setting for the ruler puts the left hand margin in column one and the right hand in column 70. If you want to alter these setting you simply draw another ruler, or copy the default ruler and alter that. You are allowed any number of rulers so you could have one paragraph set 10 columns in and 50 columns wide; while the next one could be twice as wide. The text will be formated according to the nearest ruler above the cursor. I managed to get the ruler to cover a text area 500 columns wide, I could have gone further but since my printer can only cope with 132 columns I couldn't see the point. However being able to set such wide documents does open interesting possibilities for wide — though unprintable — tables, especially since the sideways scrolling works so quickly.

## INPUT, FORMAT AND MARKERS

Text entry can be performed in the over-write mode or in insert mode which chunters the text along inserting characters at the cursor position. *Protext* has a wide selection of cursor and text movement keys. You can move the cursor by characters, words, lines, screens, paragraphs or even jump to a particular line with **CTRL - G** followed by the line number. Deletion can be by character, word, whole line or block. The block markers are set by **SHIFT-COPY** and once set, you can copy, move, delete or write a file out to disk or tape . The Ctrl keys are also used for inserting the embedded printer control codes — for underlining etc. These appear as inverse symbols though they can be made invisible if desired.

A document can be formated so that it has a ragged right hand edge or it is right hand justified. A by-product of right hand justified text is that spaces can appear where they could look rather silly, between *Mr* and *A. Jones*, for example. *Protext* allows for the insertion of 'hard' spaces, in effect these join up two words as if they were one. If you have formatted text as right justified and are using narrow margins combined with the occasional long word you will notice that word wrap forces words to be on one line or another. This means that if a word is not hyphenated and so split onto two lines your text will develop some large gaps. **CTRL** - embeds a hidden hyphen into a word which tells the program that you don't mind that word being hyphenated.

## GLOBALS

Apart from the editing commands there are three more command levels; stored commands, which deal with printing; external commands for disks, and the command mode. Pressing **ESC** presents you with a window on the lower part of the screen — initially seven lines deep. The First line is inverse and tells you how many characters are in the file, who owns the copyright (to the program, not the file) and also invites you to type **HELP** which results in a list of some thirty seven command words and their accepted abbreviations. From this level you can ask for a **CAT** of a disk or change the character set to **DANISH**. However the most important ESC. commands deal with global text operations and file input/output.

**FORMAT** is an example of a global text command, it reformats the entire text file rather than just a line or paragraph which is achieved with the edit command **CTRL-F**. One of the most important commands for any word processor worth its salt is FIND or FIND AND REPLACE. *Protext* allows for these commands and offers a series of options: **G** , means search the entire file rather than just from the cursor down; **C** , performs an upper or lower case specific search; **W** , finds the string only if it appears as a whole word; **B** , searches backwards and finally **A** replaces without asking. Provision has been made so that printer control characters and hard returns can be found and replaced. *Protext* also allows the use of wildcards within a search string, for example **ESC**

FIND ????? would find any five letter word. **COPY** repeats a find operation. A word count of the entire file can be performed instantly with **ESC COUNT**, **COUNTB** will count the words in a marked block.

## PRINTING

The most complicated part of *Protext* is printing, but that's because there are so many tools at the user's disposal. The page formatting commands are placed at the beginning of a file. These are the commands that set up such variables as print margin, page numbering, depth of headers and footers, page length and line spacing. The choice of commands is huge, the user can even set up a file so that even numbered pages have a different margin to odd numbered pages. The contents of headers and footers can also depend on the numbering of the pages. If you want to have a message printed to the screen or a comment inserted in the text, at any stage of the printing, then *Protext* can arrange that as well. The easiest way to use the stored commands is to set them up in a file on their own, that way when you want to produce a document in a particular format you only have to merge in the appropriate file.

```
PROTEXT Command Summary

HELP       H
SAVEB      SB
SETPRINT   SP
PRINTER    PR
PRINTB     PB
PRINTSB    PSB
PRINTFB    PFB
FORMATB    -
COUNTB     -
MODIFYB    MODB
DANISH     DAN
ENGLISH    ENG
FRENCH     FR
GERMAN     DEU
ITALIAN    ITA
SPANISH    ESP
SWEDISH    SVE
VERSION    VER

Press CLR to clear screen
Press ESC to enter edit mode
```

**The Escape/Help screen from Arnor's marvellous new word processing package, Protext.**

One of the problems with having software on EPROM is that it cannot be changed. This can lead to problems when it comes to dealing with printers, because many of them use non-standard codes to produce features like underlining or emphasised text. If you have an Epson type printer then *Protext* will work without any problems, as its default configuration is designed around the Epson control codes. But, even if you have managed to link your 1922 Hermes typewriter to your computer, don't worry because you can set up a file that will make *Protext* configure its output to suit. If you invoke the command **SETPRINT** you will be asked to change all sorts of weird and wonderful parameters to suit your printer. The file can be saved and used as the printer driver.

As well as being able to print the current file straight to the printer *Protext* allows you to print out a marked block. Files can also be printed to a disk or tape drive or even to the screen, thus giving you the chance of finding out just what a mess you have made of your text before committing it to paper.

## CRITICISM

There are two points that strike me about this package. Firstly, I am stunned by the speed at which *Protext* performs the text operations, there is nothing like it on the Amstrad. Secondly, it really does seem to have most of the features of *Word Star* but with an elegance and simplicity all of its own. Due mostly to the way the commands are structured, they are a joy to use and very easy to learn; unlike **Word Star** with its requirement for multiple nested control keys. I have always been irritated by cursor keys that move either too slowly or so fast that they overshoot the mark; the repeat on these keys is spot on. The flexibility of *Protext* is remarkable, largely because of the huge variety of file input/output and printing commands and the attention to detail that has been lavished on this package.

My complaints are few and mostly unimportant. A delete line right command would have been appreciated as well as a much more obvious CAPS LOCK indicator. The insert system does not work as well as it could, one always ends up with text overflowing the ruler settings and staying there until a FORMAT is performed. It would have been much neater if the text always remained within its bounderies. However, that fault is effectively mitigated by the speed at which a paragraph of text can be re-formatted. Although the documentation is excellent in terms of the help it gives, I think this product deserves something a little more posh than the scrappy little book that is included.

For the asking price, *Protext* knocks *Pocket Word Star* into a cocked hat, but that's not the only reason why I recommend *Protext*. The way the hardware and the software have been put together leads me to believe that there are going to be some really great products to work in conjunction with this one. For kick off how about a spelling checker chaps? And would it be too much to ask someone to develop a sound context checker for hard worked magazine editors? No? It would be nice. . . .

**Jeremy Spencer**

# MUSIC COMPOSER

### Kuma Software, £9.95 cass

This is quite a competent little package which turns your Amstrad into a music processor (as opposed to a word processor). It allows you to create, play, edit and store pieces of music. It also has the ability to copy and combine user defined pieces of music created by you. In this manner you can store and play pieces up to 1000 notes long. On the other hand you could have five shorter compositions of 200 notes each. *Music Composer* is a trifle slow in operation, being written in BASIC and it only copes with one line (or monophonic) music using a single voice from the sound chip. If you're musically literate, then the program should give you no problems at all. For those of us with lesser capabilities, the manual contains all the information needed. However, I suspect a fair bit of initial head–scratching will be necessary if you have never tried playing anything before.

On loading, Music Composer plays through its demonstration tune – classical music buffs will enjoy its rendition of Bach's Double Violin Concerto (even though it's in a different key). As it plays through, so the notes are presented on a scrolling screen. One or two quibbles here. First of all, the program only recognises pieces set in major keys. As the demo tune is written in a minor key and played in the major, you are given the wrong information on the screen – hardly a good start. The speed of the piece is good but it somehow loses time slightly, though after messing about with different speeds, it seems as if it could be just be a problem at this particular speed.

The display is yellow notes on a blue background, with the sharps, flats and stave in black. Here a choice of colours would have been useful. It would not have been difficult and would have satisfied everybody's requirements. Some of the notes are depicted with their tails facing the wrong way, which looks a little odd, and the sharps and flats appear in a rather strange configuration. Barlines have been omitted but this presents no real problem as it is the program's intention to cater to those who only wish to create and play tunes easily and not to teach all of the finery of composition.

*Music Composer* operates in three modes: Composer, Editor and Mixer. The composer mode allows you to enter notes one by one. Each note is defined by its alphabetic name, then its length; ie crotchet, quaver etc. A useful option at this point is the display giving you the note names. You can also choose between high, middle and low range. The screen only displays nine or so notes before scrolling onwards, holding the last three notes on screen as it does. A handy note counter numbers the notes as you enter them. You can decide to either hear the notes on display, the entire piece created so far or just the last note entered on the screen. Very thoughtfully, you can view different parts of your masterpiece just by entering the correct note number. At this point, your reviewer found it helpful to have a pen and paper handy to jot down the relevant numbers for quick access.

The Editor mode has a cursor that you can move left or right and check out notes at will. Offending notes are painlessly removed and alternatives substituted. Additional notes may also be added. The help option is still available here, in case you are uncertain about the notes.

One of the program's best features is its ability to copy defined sections. For this it goes into Mixer mode. Sections of your masterpiece can be copied into a separate address and then shuffled around, repeated or re—ordered. The whole thing can then be joined together and played out as one long piece. The speed can be set and if you wish, the key of the whole composition may be changed. Once you are happy with it or if the inspiration factor is low, then you can dump it to tape and reload it at a later date.

Generally, this isn't a bad program. The editor functions are well thought out and the program is easy to use throughout. The one or two hiccups mentioned earlier on in the review are only mildly annoying and for those of us who would like the chance to experiment without spending a vast fortune, it is well worth a second look.

**Jon Bates**



# Thinking Software? ... think Tasman

## TASPRINT 464 — The Style Writer

**A** must for dot-matrix printer owners! Print your program output and listings in a choice of five impressive print styles. TASPRINT 464 utilises the graphics capabilities of dot-matrix printers to form, with a double pass of the printhead, output in a range of five fonts varying from the futuristic DATA-RUN to the hand-writing style of PALACE SCRIPT. TASPRINT 464 drives the dot-matrix printers listed below and can be used to print AMSWORD/TASWORD 464 text files. TASPRINT 464 gives your output originality and style. Completely compatible with the 664.

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LECTURA LIGHT - clean and pleasing to read
MEDIAN - a serious business-like script
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*Typical Tasprint output. Please note that different makes of printer produce different sized output.*

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## TASCOPY 464 — The Screen Copier

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TASCOPY 464 — cassette **£9·90** disc **£12·90**




TASPRINT 464 and TASCOPY 464 drive the following dot-matrix printers:

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*"There is no better justification for buying a 464 than this program"*
POPULAR COMPUTING WEEKLY, NOVEMBER 1984

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All Tasman 464 software is fully compatible with the 664.





# SUPERPOWER'S FOREGROUND ROM POWER

*Putting aside the joystick for a day, GARY LIDDON takes a foreground ROM package out for a test ride . . .*

*Discpower* from **Superpower** is an extension ROM aimed at those who want total power over their disk drive. Packed into a 16K EPROM, the package offers a sector editor, disassembler, a ROM reader and various other utilities. The package comes as a single chip so your first problem is to find somewhere to plug it into, as the Amstrad has no spare ROM sockets. Understandably, Superpower recommend their own external ROM board, and quite good it is too, but there are various others that should do the job just as well.

*Discpower* is a foreground ROM, so when you access it via the | **DP** command, BASIC is thrown out of the window and *Discpower* is banked in. Before accessing the ROM make sure that you have nothing valuable in memory since choosing the quit function will wipe memory before giving you control of the machine again.

Once you've typed | **DP** the ROM displays a menu containing the options available. Probably most useful of them all is option one, Directory. *Discpower*'s catalogue function is far superior to the BASIC **CAT** command allowing you edit and change the directory. The directory block on disk is read into a buffer area held in high memory. You are then put into the memory editor with which you can alter parts of the directory block and once you've made any alterations you save the directory sector back out again. This is incredibly handy as now it's possible to retrieve accidently erased files. The manual gives a clear and concise description of how to get back erased and even partly overwritten programs.

The memory editor used on the the directory function is best described as a fully fledged Z80 monitor and is used throughout the package for editing and for various other options. Initially operating on *discpower*'s 1K buffer sitting at A000, the memory editor displays a formated listing of the machine's RAM with hex on the right and its ASCII equivalent on the left. Using the cursor keys across the memory block, you are able to edit in hex or ASCII, changing between the two by pressing the back-slash key. At the top of the screen is a status bar showing the binary equivalent of the byte currently being edited and a one line disassembly taken from the cursor's position in memory. Also displayed on the status bar are the hex and decimal values of the byte being scrutinised plus a description of what you are editing. This depends on what option you entered the memory editor from. The editor is not limited to Superpower's 1K buffer block. You can also edit any part of the machine's memory using all of the program's powerful facilities. Also included is a comprehensive block move function plus a disassembler, both these commands can operate throughout the machines memory and the disassembler may be directed to the printer.

```
ROM number: 03      PROTEXT        C000 H
 A000 01 00 09 07 21 C0 C3 3E ....!..>
 A008 C0 C3 F9 E2 C3 F9 E2 C3 ........
 A010 46 EC C3 47 EC C3 48 EC F..G..H.
 A018 C3 49 EC C3 4A EC C3 4B .I..J..K
 A020 EC 50 52 4F 54 45 58 54 .PROTEXT
 A028 A0 50 52 4F 54 45 58 D4 .PROTEX.
 A030 D0 10 B1 10 B2 10 B3 10 ........
 A038 B4 10 B5 10 B6 00 CD 12 ........
 A040 B9 FE 08 D0 25 25 D5 E5 ....%%..
 A048 EB 13 21 BA C0 CD 9F C1 ..!.....
 A050 E5 21 00 C0 AF 86 2C 86 .!......
 A058 2C 86 2C 86 2C 86 2C 86 ........
```

ROM reading ROM?

On the main menu you'll also find functions for reading and writing disk sectors. With this option you can change any byte on a disk. Using the sector function you now have the amazing power of easily being able to thoroughly corrupt a disk beyond repair! The best thing to do is take the manual's advice and only operate on backup disks. Selecting sector edit, you are asked for the sector and track you wish to operate upon. Once chosen, the sector is dumped to RAM and you are given full control with the memory editor. If you want to change a particular file on disk with the memory edit but you don't know what sector it's contained in you can load it via the program load function. The first sector of the program is loaded into the memory buffer and subsequent sectors can be loaded using CTRL and cursor down keys.

In the utilities section you can find a disk backup option and file and disk display modes. Disk backup will copy any unprotected disk while very prettily displaying how many sectors have been copied. File display gives a graphics display of any particular file and the sectors it is occupying on the disk while disk display shows how much of the diskspace has been used.

```
DiscPower
1 Directory
2 Read Disc Sector
3 Read Disc File
4 Read ROM
5 Edit Memory
6 Write Sector to Disc
7 Disassemble/Tabulate
8 Search Memory
9 Utilities
0 Screen (40/12)
```

Disc Power's main menu screen

All in all *Discpower* is one the most handy ROMs I've used to date. The price isn't extortionate but if you don't own a ROM board you'll need one. The only real gripe I have is that the when you return to BASIC, memory is wiped out. Superpower could have got round this by making *Discpower* a background ROM. Overall, though, an excellent product and extremely useful for various things. The inclusion of the monitor plus the clear and informative documentation make *Discpower* a very worthwhile package indeed.

# PRESTEL, LIFE ON A PHONE BILL

## WHAT IS VIEWDATA?

Conventional terminals, such as those used to access BT GOLD, operate using just raw ASCII characters, they have no facilities for colour, graphics or other features such as reveal. A system was developed where sequences of ASCII characters could be recognised to change colours, introduce flashing and so on. This system is paged based and is called Viewdata. The PRESTEL service, run by British Telecom is one example of Viewdata in action.

ASCII terminals operate by scrolling a screen of displayed text upwards when the bottom line is reached, Viewdata on the other hand organises information into frames, each frame occupying the whole of the screen. A frame consists of 24 lines of 40 characters, a total of 960 screen locations.

A page of Viewdata information may use one or more of up to 26 frames, each page can be accessed at any time with its unique page number. The frames within the selected page are identified with a lower case letter in the range a to z, displayed after the page number.

The graphics of Viewdata are made up using a system of alphamosiacs. Each of the 960 screen positions is actually made up of six smaller blocks, any combination of which may be displayed. These mosiacs allow simple block graphics to be implemented, as the screen pictures show.

There are eight colours: black, white, red, green, cyan, magenta, yellow and blue that can be displayed. Also, colours may be flashing, and characters can be single or double height. Any combination of characters may be concealed from view, for instance the answer to a quiz, and revealed by pressing a button on a keyboard.

## DYNAMIC FRAMES

Until recently most Viewdata pages were built up character by character, line by line, but now new techniques have been developed that allow any part of a displayed page to be changed dynamically, that is at any time, rather than line by line. This has been used to great effect in


ESP
THE PEN THAT LIKES TO SAY
YES
ELECTRIC STUDIO PEN
WHILST OUR COMPETITORS MOSTLY SAY NO!
LOOK!
THE ELECTRIC STUDIO

| FEATURES/ FUNCTIONS | ESP | dk'tronics | Any Other |
|---|---|---|---|
| SINGLE COMPLETE ON SCREEN MENU | YES | NO | Please compare any other pen package currently available |
| DRAG SCREEN OBJECTS | YES | NO | |
| FLIP SCREEN OBJECTS | YES | NO | |
| CURSOR REMOVAL | YES | NO | |
| ELASTIC BOXES | YES | YES | |
| ELASTIC LINE | YES | YES | |
| ELASTIC TRIANGLE | YES | NO | |
| ELASTIC ELLIPSE | YES | NO | |
| ELASTIC DIAMOND | YES | NO | |
| ELASTIC POLYGON | YES | NO | |
| ELASTIC HEXAGON | YES | NO | |
| ELASTIC OCTAGON | YES | NO | |
| ELASTIC CUBE | YES | NO | |
| ELASTIC PYRAMID | YES | NO | |
| CIRCLES | YES | YES | |
| SOLID CIRCLES | YES | NO | |
| SOLID BOXES | YES | NO | |
| SOLID ELLIPSES | YES | NO | |
| WEDGES | YES | NO | |
| BEZIER SIMULATIONS | YES | NO | |
| ZOOM EDIT | YES | YES | |
| REVERSE/MIRROR IMAGES | YES | NO | |
| REFERENCE BACKGROUND | YES | NO | |
| GRID BACKGROUND | YES | NO | |
| X,Y DISPLAY OPTION | YES | NO | |
| PAINT FILL | YES | YES | |
| COLOUR WASHING | YES | NO | |
| RESIDENT SCREEN DUMP | YES | NO | |
| 3D EDGE PLOTTING | YES | NO | |
| TEXT | YES | YES | |
| 9 BRUSH SIZES | YES | NO | |
| 18 SPRAY NOZZLES | YES | NO | |
| 4 BASIC TEXTURES | YES | NO | |
| TEXTURE VARIATION | YES | NO | |
| XOR TEXTURE SHADING | YES | NO | |
| RESIDENT SYMBOL/SHAPE FILE | YES | NO | |
| RESIDENT FLECK PRINT FILE | YES | NO | |
| 26 PAPER COLOURS | YES | NO | |
| 15 COLOUR/TONE PALETTE | YES | NO | |
| POINT SETTING | YES | YES | |
| FIXED POINT RAYS | YES | NO | |
| MIRROR DRAWING | YES | NO | |
| HOME FUNCTION | YES | NO | |
| KEY CONTROL NUDGE | YES | YES | |
| JOYSTICK NUDGE | YES | NO | |
| AVAILABLE FOR 464 | YES | YES | |
| AVAILABLE FOR 664 | YES | ? | |
| MODE 1 & 2 AVAILABLE | YES | ? | |

DUE TO LACK OF SPACE, WE ARE NOT ABLE TO LIST THE OTHER 20+ FUNCTIONS OUR PEN IS CAPABLE OF.
JUST SOME OF THE THINGS YOU CAN DO WITH THIS COMPLETE LIGHT PEN PACKAGE
USER DEFINED CHARACTERS
FREEHAND DRAWING WITH THE GRAPHICS PROGRAM
GAME SCREEN DESIGN WITH COLOUR EDITING FACILITY
SCHEMATIC AND GEOMETRIC DESIGN DRAWINGS
AVAILABLE FOR: CPC464 ON TAPE £19.95
CPC464 ON DISC (incl. Interface)
£26.95
CPC664 ON DISC £26.95
Also available: High Res Graphics Program for more serious applications (includes both Mode 1 and Mode 2)
TAPE £9.95 OR DISC £14.95
AVAILABLE FROM ANY GOOD COMPUTER STORE
If you have any difficulty obtaining our products, please send cheque/P.O. to:
THE ELECTRIC STUDIO
P.O. BOX 96, LUTON LU3 2JP Tel: (0582) 595222

creating moving pictures. The Micronet Christmas Card demonstration is a good example.

## PRESTEL

The PRESTEL service is British Telecoms Viewdata service. Within PRESTEL are thousands of pages covering all aspects of home and business applications. PRESTEL, like many other Viewdata systems, is two-way, that is information may be sent to PRESTEL as well as being received from it. An example of this is the mailbox facility which allows you to send a message to any other user providing that you know their mailbox number. The next time the receipient logs on, they will be informed that there is a new message for them which they may read at any time.

The procedure for logging onto PRESTEL is quite straightforward. Firstly, check that your interface and MODEM are connected up and selected for 1200/75 operation and then dial up the PRESTEL service. Almost all regions have a local number for PRESTEL which can be obtained either from the operator, or when you are on-line. If you cannot obtain a local number then the Enterprise computer in London can always be accessed on 01-618 1111.

The first page that is displayed informs you which computer you have been connected to and then asks you for your customer identification code. If you have not yet subscribed to PRESTEL, then a demonstration number can be used to log-on to give you a sample of the service that can expect; the ID code for this demonstration number is 4444444444 (that's a big ten-four, little buddy).

When a valid ID code has been entered, the next screen is displayed which asks for the password for your ID code. This is a four digit number and for the demonstration service is 4444. Having entered the password, you are finally logged into the PRESTEL service.

The next page that is encountered is the main index page for the PRESTEL service. From this page, a directory of what is available and where you can find it can be accessed.

Most of the time, you will find that you will be guided through the frames by being prompted for a keypress at the end of each one. However, you can move to a particular page at any time by keying in its number. The sequence required is to first enter a star (*) character, followed by the page number and terminated by a hash (#)character.

It is also possible to step back through the frames that you have called until you reach the last 'a' frame that you accessed by typing a star followed by a hash.

A couple of good pages to try are *13888# and *60161#. The first is a demonstration of graphics and includes several 'galleries' containing some very striking pictures. The second is a demonstration of dynamic frames, which also serves as a very good test for your software - if it can handle these OK then the chances are that the rest will be displayed without problem. When you have finished using PRESTEL you should logoff by going to page 90 using *90#, which will take to the exit page and then log you off from the PRESTEL computer.

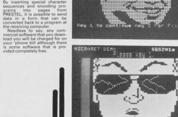
The pages on PRESTEL are provided from a wide range of sources, these sources are officially termed Information Providers or IPs for short. The information ranges from financial information provided from the City to the latest sports news provided by news agencies. Not all the information on the PRESTEL service is available to all of its users. It is possible for an IP to permit only certain customer IDs to access their pages, and more often than not these customers are charged every time they use these pages. This system is known as a Closed User Group (CUG). An example of a CUG is MICRONET 800 which provides information about home computers and peripherals as well as carrying software reviews and a 'Swap Shop' service to get rid of your old system when you reckon its time to 'upgrade'.

## TELESOFTWARE

Viewfax 258, one of the IPs on PRESTEL, have been developing a system to download software over the telephone to an Amstrad computer. The system is due to go on line from October. By inserting special character sequences and encoding programs into pages from PRESTEL, it is possible to send data in a form that can be converted back to a program at the receiving computer.

Needless to say, any commercial software that you download you will be charged for on your 'phone bill although there is some software that is provided completely free.



# BROWSING THROUGH

## Or: How the exclusive preserves of Business are becoming

**ROY JONES is our special CP/M correspondent, a man who's delved to the very depths of an ERA Y/N? command and survived to tell the tale. In this, the first of a regular series of articles, he attempts to give a general view of CP/M (control program for microcomputers) without going too deeply into its technicalities. In subsequent articles he will be exploring various aspects of the CP/M operating system and some of the serious and not too serious uses of computers. He will also be looking at some of the more popular CP/M programs such as Wordstar, dBase II, Supercalc etc, and some of the vast range of Public Domain (Free) software available for CP/M.**

### WHAT IS AN OPERATING SYSTEM?

No! It's not something used by surgeons nor is it a system for finding winners of the 2.30 at Epsom. In the early days of computers there was little or no standardization, each computer and each piece of software was more or less a one-off affair. This one-offness has great disadvantages as programs and data cannot readily be transferred from one computer to any other, and this makes them lonely if not positively bad tempered. But the main consequences of one-offness is high cost as it can take months or even years to develop a complex program.

The mid-70s saw the arrival of the first significant operating system — CP/M. The purpose of CP/M was to provide a standard environment in which programs could run. This had tremendous advantages for developing software as the programmer now had standard actions for all the routine computer functions such as displaying text on the screen, getting a character from the keyboard, getting a file from disk and so on. Prior to this, all these actions needed special software written to suit the particular computer they were intended for. With CP/M the programmer no longer needed to worry about what kind of circuitry the computer was using. He could just use one of the standard functions provided by CP/M to do almost anything he needed. This allowed him to spend his time not on the routine housework type programming but on the real job of the program. This, coupled with the now much larger number of possible users for any new programs developed, brought about great reductions in software prices and vastly increased the amount of new programs developed.

### DOING THE HOUSEHOLD CHORES

CP/M is a computer program just like any other. The main difference between it and other types of programs is that it takes care of the computer's housework — looks after disk files, handles and correctly routes input and output signals to the screen and printer etc, basically it handles all the routine jobs which have to be done before a useful program can be run. CP/M is split into three basic parts. The CCP (console command processor) looks at the characters which are typed in at the keyboard to see if they are anything it should be doing something about. The next part is the BDOS (Basic Disk Operating System) this controls the function of the disk drives and provides processing of the various inputs and outputs. These two parts will be the same for all machines. The third part, the BIOS (Basic Input Output System) is unique for each type of computer. The BIOS is is a special piece of software, usually written by the computer manufacturer to connect his hardware up to the other parts of CP/M. The BIOS determines such things disk capacity, disk format, how many and what type of disk drives, printer ports and any special things needed for his particular hardware set up. This means that a version of CP/M set up for one machine will not run on another unless the BIOS can be modified.

Over the years CP/M has undergone a number of developments and is now available for 16 bit machines like the IBM PC as well as 8 bit machines such as the Amstrad. The latest version for 8 bit machines is **CP/M Plus** which has some added features and the ability to

### IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

The main article is a general introduction to the fact, operation and functions of CP/M. But at the end of the day, what does having it do for you? Well, we'll be looking at plenty of software in some detail in forthcoming issues, and I won't be missing out software that is readily and cheaply available. Apart from the large amounts of commercial software available, there is the 'Public Domain'.

The public domain probably has even more software than the commercial area and is one of the major reasons for CP/M's popularity as it provides at very low cost many useful programs.

Since the early days of CP/M, computer enthusiasts have been exchanging software they have written themselves. This software has been put together into disk libraries by various clubs and groups and this ever increasing source now contains hundreds of megabytes of programs, covering every conceivable subject from games and utilities to complete languages and business programs.

These libraries are divided into volumes in much the same way as a normal book library, a volume being a disk full of material. A disk volume may contain a number different more or less unrelated items or may contain just one or two larger programs. Some very large or complex programs may be spread over two or more volumes. A volume is usually about 240K in size, this being the capacity of the single sided single density 8" disks on which these libraries were first distributed.

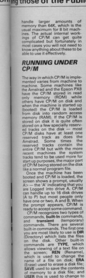
The quality of the programs from the public domain are naturally as varied as its sources. Some programs are very good indeed, having been contributed by professionals in the computer field. One great advantage of public domain material is that very often the programs are supplied in source form so that the program can, if required, be modified to suit your own needs. This is also very useful if you are learning a new programming language as many examples of programs in various languages are available.

Public domain software is not actually sold, as contributing authors normally stipulate that their programs can be copied and distributed freely only on a non-profit basis. There is, however, a small charge normally made of between £1.50 and £5 for copying a volume but this still represents excellent value for money. Another development in public domain is 'User supported software', the idea of this being that someone who has written a program and who does not have the resources or inclination to distribute it in the normal way gets it distributed in the public domain. These programs usually come with a sign or message of some sort saying 'If you find this program of use please send me some money', and then go on to suggest some suitable figure. This seems quite a nice idea as it gives the user a chance to try before he buys.

Public domain software is available on various disk formats including Amstrad from the PD software library, (address at the end of the article). Other user groups also have public domain material but usually only in the disk format of the particular machine that they support.

# CP/M

## ecoming those of the Public Domain and not worrying too much in the process . . .



handle larger amounts of memory than 64K, which is the usual maximum for 8 bit machines. The actual internal workings of CP/M can get quite complicated but fortunately in most cases you will not need to know anything about these to be able to use it effectively.

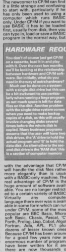
### RUNNING UNDER CP/M

The way in which CP/M is implemented varies from machine to machine. Some machines like the Amstrad and the Epson PX8 have the CP/M stored in read only memory (ROM) while others have CP/M on disk and when the machine is started up (booted) the CP/M is loaded from disk into random access memory (RAM). If the CP/M is stored on disk it is quite often stored on a few specially reserved tracks on the disk — most CP/M disks have at least one reserved track as does the Amstrad. Some times the reserved tracks contain the entire CP/M but with the more recent machines the system tracks tend to be used more for start up purposes, the major part of CP/M being stored on the disk like a normal program file.

Once the machine has been booted and CP/M is loaded, the screen shows a prompt, usually A> — the 'A' indicating that you are Logged into drive A. CP/M can handle up to 16 disk drives (A to P) but most people only have one or two, A and B. When the prompt appears, CP/M is ready to accept some command.

CP/M recognizes two types of commands, **built-In** commands, and **transient** (temporary) commands. There are several built-in commands. The first one you are most likely to use is **DIR** (Directory) which lists the files on the disk. Other built-in commands are **TYPE**, which allows viewing of a text file on the screen; **REN** (Rename), which is used to change the name of a file on disk; **ERA** (Erase) used to erase a disk file; **SAVE** used to save the contents of memory to a disk file; and **USER** this is used to change to current user area.

If something is typed in which is not an built-in command then CP/M will look on the disk for a transient command. A transient command is actually a program that can be loaded into memory and run; unlike a BASIC program however a transient command program is stored on the disk in a form that the computer can read and run straight away.



### WHAT'S IT GOOD FOR?

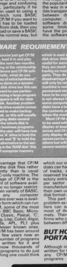
The newcomer to CP/M can find it a little strange and confusing to start with, particularly if he has only been used to using a computer which runs BASIC only. Under CP/M if you want to use BASIC it has to be loaded first, usually from disk, then you can type in, load or save a BASIC program in the normal way, but with the advantage that CP/M will handle the disk files rather more elegantly than is usual with a BASIC-only machine. The real advantage of CP/M is the huge amount of software available. You are no longer restricted to a certain variety of BASIC. Virtually any computer language there ever was is available in some form which can run under CP/M, some of the most popular are BBC Basic, Microsoft Basic, Cbasic, Pascal, 'C', Forth, Prolog, Lisp, Cobol, Algol, Fortran, Ada, APL, PL1 plus dozens of lesser known ones. Because CP/M has been around for a good few years now an enormous number of programs have been written for it and there are now thousands of application programs to do just about any thing one could think of.

#### HARDWARE REQUIREMENTS

You don't of course just get CP/M on a cassette, load it in and play with it. Over the next few months we'll be looking at the relationship between hardware and CP/M software. But initially, what do you need in the way of extra hardware?

Much can be done on a system with a single disk drive but this can be a bit awkward to use particularly when running a large program as not much space is left for data files on the disk. Another problem with the single drive system comes when you need to make backup copies of a disk, as this will usually involve changing disks several times before the whole disk is copied. Many business programs assume that the user will have two disk drives, the 'A' drive to hold the actual program and 'B' to hold the data disk. An alternative to the second disk drive is the 'RAM disk' this is a section of computer memory which is used as if it were a normal disk drive. RAM disks can be very useful for some applications as they are much faster in operation having no mechanical moving parts. They do however have the disadvantage that their contents will only be retained while the machine is switched on, so for permanent storage the contents have to be copied to a floppy. This is not always the case because some computers that use RAM disks have a battery built in so that the contents are not lost even when the machine is switched off.

Most CP/M software is designed to be used with a screen which will display at least 80 characters across and 24 rows. Screens which only display 40 or 64 characters across can be used for some applications but will be found to be a severe restriction.



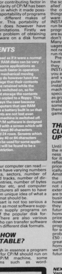
### PORTABLE SOFTWARE

The major contributing factor in the popularity of CP/M has been the way in which it made possible transportability of programs between different makes of computer. This portability of software does however have some limitations. Firstly we have the problem of obtaining the software on a disk format which our computer can read — disks can have varying numbers of tracks, sectors, number of reserved tracks, number of directory entries, number of bytes per sector etc, and computer manufacturers all seem to have their own unique idea of what a disk format should be.

This part is not too serious a problem as most software suppliers can supply programs on most of the popular disk formats. There are also various firms who can transfer software between different disk formats.

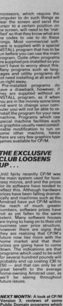
### BUT HOW PORTABLE?

Although in essence a program written for CP/M should run on any CP/M machine, some programs such as word-



processors, which require the computer to do such things as clear the screen and send the cursor to a certain position on the screen, will need to be 'installed' so that they know what are the codes to use to do these things. Most commercial software is supplied with a special INSTALL program that has to be run before you can use the main program. Quite often programs are supplied pre-installed so you don't have to worry about this. Many programs such as languages and utility programs do not need installing at all and will run right away.

Pre-installed programs do have a drawback, however, if they are supplied without an INSTALL program, as if when you are in the money some time and want to change your computer you will not be able to re-install the program for your new machine. Programs which use special machine facilities such as graphics usually need considerable modification to run on some other machine, hence there are very few graphics type games available for CP/M.



### THE EXCLUSIVE CLUB LOOSENS UP . . .

Until fairly recently CP/M was the main system used for business micros, and and the prices for its software have tended to reflect this. Although hardware prices have been falling dramatically and machines such as the Amstrad have put CP/M within the reach of much greater numbers, software prices have not as yet fallen to the same extent. Many software houses are trying to hang on to their old business user price structure, however there are signs that they are realizing that CP/M's future now lies more with the home market and that their prices are going have to come down. The indications are that programs which used to be sold for several hundred pounds will probably end up costing £30 to £50 — and that can only be of great benefit to the average home-owning Amstrad user, as we'll be seeing throughout future issues.

***NEXT MONTH:*** **A look at CP/M Version 3; reviews of some Public Domain programs which make life easier with CP/M; using the standard CP/M utility programs and more . . .**



# DON'T UPSET THE

**The Amstrad computer has been adopted by a host of software houses which cut their teeth on the Spectrum. Two of the most stalwart are TASMAN SOFTWARE and CAMPBELL SOFT. Tasman became famous for their word processor *Tasword*, later upgraded to *Tasword Two*. Campbell Soft, headed by John Campbell, became renowned for their exceptionally well designed database, *Master File*. When Amstrad launched the 464 both companies took the opportunity to re-write their software for a machine that offered greater speed, better text display and extra memory.**

Tasword's word processor was available only a few months after the Amstrad launch so the package was designed around the limitations imposed by the cassette system. The early version, *Tasword 464* allowed only 13K of text space and a lot of the program was in BASIC. Later, when the disk drives began to take off, Tasman produced a much improved version called, *Tasword 464-D*, this package was designed for use exclusively on a disk based system. The immediate advantage was the increased text space, which was achieved by splitting the program into two sections; the main section, which did all of the graft, and the menu section, where the user called for files to be printed or saved etc. But the important change was the inclusion of a data merge facility — *Tasword* was growing up.

In simplistic terms data merge programs allows the user to write a document like a letter and address it to a large number of separate people. The name and address of each of the recipients is kept on a file and, as each standard letter is printed out, the program pulls in a name and address from another file and inserts it into each letter. The effect is a series of standardised, but personal letters.

Let's take as an example the case of a secretary of the local dog club. He wants to send out letters to each of the club's 200 members and enclose the certificates of registration for the club members' mut or muts. First let's deal with the letter. Initially what you will need is a list of each club members' names and addresses. Using *Tasword-D* you could compile a document with just such a list, one entry of which could look something like this;

**&NMaxwell Fasnett**
**&AThe Larches**
**Hackerbrown Hill Road**
**Maisdon**
**Kimblewickshire**

You will notice that the name of the member is preceeded by **&N** while the address follows the characters **&A**. These codes are significant to *Tasword-D* firstly because the **&** is recognised as being the 'data merge character'; in other words when



Tasword's editing screen with the seven-line option field at the top.

*Tasword-D* comes across the **&** character while it is in data merge mode it knows it must insert some text from another file. The character after the **&** tells it which piece of text to insert. To continue with the example. Now that we have written a list of the club members to a *Tasword-D* text file we have to compose the letter.

**&N**
**&A**
**Dear &N**
**I am writing to inform you that the next Dog show will be held in the village hall. May I remind members that we don't want a repetition of last year's goings on because it upsets the vicar.**

**Yours bla bla**

With the above letter in memory you can now select the *Tasword-D* option 'Print with data merge'. You are then asked for the name of the file that contains the data, and that done the program checks to make sure you're not telling any 'porkies' by making sure the file is on disk. At this point the computer asks you if you want it to print a letter for each of the records that it has on the data file or, if you want a chance to veto any of them. If you select the first option then all of the records are printed out and our example will look something like this;



Masterfile's opening page.

*Maxwell Fasnett*
*The Larches*
*Hackerbrown Hill Road*
*Maisdon*
*Kimblewickshire*

*Dear Maxwell Fasnett*
*I am writing to inform you that the next Dog show will be held in the village hall. May I remind members that we don't want a repetition of last year's goings on because it upsets the vicar.*

*Yours bla bla*

A simple letter like the one in the example above is very easy to use, but there is no reason why your data file should not contain a great deal more information if required. The certificate for each members' dog could be set up in a *Tasword-D* file with data merge characters and identifiers left in the appropriate place. You could, for example keep a file, not only with the name and address of each member but also with intimate details of the dogs — type, sex and winnings etc. *Tasword-D* data merge then processes them all in exactly the same way.

There is, however, a snag. Using a text file as a database is not a lot of fun. After all a database is only as good as the information it contains, well that's what my Granny keeps telling me. The important thing is that you are almost certain to want to update the information or add to it, otherwise it will become useless. The most efficient way to do this is to use a data base program.

*Masterfile* is just such a program. It can be used either as a

# E VICAR

tape- or disk-based system. Learning to use this program is a bit of an uphill task, mostly because the instructions are not up to the standard of T. However, once familiar with it you should appreciate just what a powerful and flexible system it is. Records can be designed to each record which gives the date when subscription renewals are due. *Tasword-D* could be instructed to send a 'kneecap or money' letter to the defaulters.

*Master File* has many more functions which make it ideal to use in conjunction with *Tasword-D* but it also has one very

```
CURSOR MOVEMENT
↑ start of text      ▼↑ fast scroll up
↓ end of text        ▼↓ fast scroll dn
→ start of line      ▼→ word right
← end of line        ▼← word left
-( scroll up         -) scroll down
Δ1=scroll down help    Δ2=help off
```

be presented in almost any format, the entry of data is a sinch. Using such a program to keep just a list of names and addresses is an insult, but it's very forgiving and gets on the job without so much as a grumble.

Apart from being able to store 32K of information, more than you could hope to hold on a *Tasword-D* file, *Master File* complements *Tasword-D* because of the flexibility in designing the layout of the records. The *Tasword-D* data merge character must be present at the beginning of each field, this can be achieved with **m**. An address can be stored in one field and the lines be separated with special characters so when it is processed it can be broken to accord with the accepted means of writing an address. It is very important to be able to keep data in some sort of order, perhaps you would want the names sorted alphabetically. The problem is that you need to keep names in proper order, as opposed to army style. A recipient of a letter may take exception to a letter addressed; Dear Candy Robin. In some data bases, storing the name as Robin Candy can mean that it is placed under 'R' instead of 'C' in the sorted list. *Master File* allows you to separate the surname from the Christian names so allowing them to be stored in proper form and yet sorted according to Christian name.*Master File* can also be used to store numerical information which can be handy for the *Tasword-D* conditional data merge. You could have a field in

serious drawback. *Tasword-D* reads Ascii codes, it cannot understand a file which represents characters or data in binary form — a pity because that's exactly how*Master File* stores its data. The reason for this is that *Master File* can store a lot more data if it is compacted into binary form. The drawback means that not only are the files incompatible with *Tasword-D* but also with most other systems where you could use the data.

John Campbell cannot be described as a slow thinking man. Realising the enhanced value of *Master File* if it could be linked to *Tasword-D* and other systems, he wrote a package called *Master File 464 Program Extensions*. It's a pity that John doesn't apply the same compaction techniques to his software titles as*Master File* does to its data. The extension package has a great many uses besides just converting files for *Tasword-D* but we shall have to deal with those at a later date. The extension package comes in two parts. *Mastexpt* is the data export facility. *Mastproc* can be used to perform operations on the files themselves.

Before you can use *Mastexpt* you must load *Master File* itself and then the file you want to send. Having done that you enter BASIC and load *Mastexpt*. Once the utility is running, you are asked a series of questions about how you want the data written to the output file. For example if you say 'yes' to 'Data identifiers to be sent' then each filed is output to the new file with **&** and the field identifier — in our case that would be **N** so producing the accepted *Tasword-D* data merge character **&N** followed by the name. *Tasword-D* can only work on data which has a carriage return and a line feed, and that requirement can also be satisfied by *Mastexpt*. If you are sending an address field then you will want it written in the form that *Tasword-D* can use, in which case reply 'yes' to the option 'Edit line breaks'. When you have correctly answered the prompts you are asked to provide a name for the output file. The next thing you know you are the proud owner of a file listing lots of dog owners and whatever other information you wanted to include. Now you can show that to *Tasword-D* and watch the printer blow up as it churns out pages of personal letters.

*Master File* and *Mastexpt* are vital tools if you are going to use the power the *Tasword-D* data merge operations offer to the full. While *Tasword-D* is a very clever and powerful wordprocessor the disk version has been criticised for being slower in moving from the edit screen to the main menu, the menu is in fact a overlay file. This was done to allow a much bigger text area than was available on the early tape version. The neatness of *Master File* is destroyed when using the export facility because in part it has to occupy the same area of memory as the main program. This means that to export a number of different files, both *Master File* and the extension must be loaded each time a file has been processed. However, both companies are working on improved versions of their respective software. Tasman are soon to launch *Tasword 6128* which will allow text files 64K long. More of the program will be in the computer at any one time and many of the functions have been speeded up. To complement the new program, Tasman are about to launch *Tas-Spell*, a spell checker with a 25,000 word dictionary which will allow the addition of more words. The spell checker will be available for the entire Amstrad range.

Campbell Soft aren't exactly sunning themselves up in the glens either. John Campbell is working on a 6128 version of *Master File* which will have the export facility built in as well as a few more options.

The Amstrad machines have been hailed as useful business tools because they can run CP/M software, while this is true it isn't the whole story. Both *Tasword-D* and *Master File* are very competent packages capable of being used in many business environments but at a price which is deceptively low. A good example is the use to which both of the programs have been put on CRASH magazine. A Great deal of the CRASH editorial is written using Tas word while all of the competition winners for CRASH, ZZAP! 64 (and soon AMTIX!) are entered and sorted using **m**. It produces labels so that prizes can be sent to the winners and then exports the data to an Apricot for inclusion in the winners list to be printed in the magazines. Of course we could use *DBase II*, we have it somewhere — but why use a sledgehammer to crack a nut?

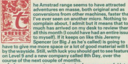
```
TASWORD
The Word Processor
© Tasman Software Ltd 1984

Print text file             P
print with Data merge       D
Save text file              S
Load text file              L
Merge text file             M
Return to text file         R
Customise program           C
save Tasword                T
catalog/change drive        X
into Basic                  B
checK spelling              K
```

The main command menu from Tasword, accessing merge operation with data from Campbellsoft's Masterfile




**. . . In which we meet the little Irish leprechaun Sean Masterson for the first time, and he introduces us not only to his wee grotto but also a few gremlins and an oddly coloured moon, as well as dusting off some books . . .**



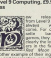
The Amstrad range seems to have attracted adventures en masse, both original and as conversions from other machines, faster than I've ever seen on another micro. Nothing to complain about, I admit but it means that too much has arrived on my desk to review them all this month (I could have had an entire issue to myself). If it keeps on like this Jeremy Spencer (or Big J as he's called) is going to have to give me more space or a lot of good material will fall by the wayside. Still, with luck you should get to see features on Level 9 and a new company called 8th Day, over the course of the next couple of months.

As far as conversions go, there is of course an awful lot of existing material, and this is helping to enrich the Amstrad software base. With new Amstrad-originated adventures, an important factor is the ready availability of disk drives — the Spectrum has had to wait for ages for drives, and even now they are still expensive compared to the price of the machine and not widely distributed; whereas the Commodore's infamous 1541 disk drive is very slow. All this should promote the development of disk-based adventures with a far greater sophistication than is traditionally available for other micros — another enrichment.

In addition to looking at the past, new trends and current games, there will be playing tips for adventurers, and this is where you come in — if you have any useful tips on any games that you would like to share with other AMTIX! readers, then write in with them post haste. I'll also be running a help contact line; all you do is write in with a list of the games you think you can help others with and I print your name and address so readers can send stamped addressed envelopes for you to return with the tips (you can have your phone number in as well, if you think you can cope with the publicity)!

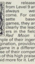
But of course, the prime object is to keep up with the new releases as well. Anyway, here are a few titles to whet your appetite . . .



# RED MOON

**Level 9 Computing, £9.95 cass**



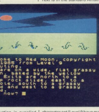
New releases from Level 9 are always welcome. For cassette based games, they are clearly the leaders in the field. *Red Moon* is another example of their ingenuity and imagination, providing a quality of game in a different league to those of their competitors. Enough of this high praise, I won't get paid more for it. Let's have a look . . .

read the book however, you should appreciate some of the narrative details which may well be lost on others.

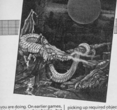
Sometime, long ago, the moon was red. It shone with the power of magik and allowed the existence of now mythical beasts. Every so often, the paths of the sun and the moon would cross and the two would fight. The moon became weaker through the centuries but few noticed the effect.

Then one day, all the castles fell out of the sky as the 'mana' (the stuff of magik) became exhausted. Afterwards, few spells worked. Those that did would eventually fail as what little mana remained, disappeared forever. A new moon had to be built. So the Red Moon Crystal came into being and was placed in a tower in the land of Baskalos. Life being the uncompromising struggle it is, the crystal was stolen. *Red Moon* is the story of how you recovered it.

The game follows the established Level 9 format, containing two hundred pictures, the option of pure text display and single command (though not necessarily two word) input. Text is in the standard Amstrad character set (Level 9 have made some costly mistakes with experimental character sets on previous games). Level 9 also experimented with a 'type ahead' system whereby the program doesn't force you to wait for the next command until it has processed the previous one. The idea is, that you can type away merrily and the computer catches you up, thus allowing a speedy dash through those sections where you know what




The introduction is supplied on the reverse of the slip card, being in the form of an old story teller reliving the experiences you are about to have! It's an atmospheric little detail and helps whet the appetite whilst the game loads. However, I did recognise references to two characters from Larry Niven's classic fantasy *The Magic Goes Away*, yet I saw no credit for this. I hope Level 9 haven't done anything naughty. If you have



you are doing. On earlier games, this had some drawbacks, but with *Red Moon* they have all been ironed out so you can really hurtle through. It may seem like a small point, but it does add greatly to the polish of the program.

The graphics aren't the greatest ever seen on an adventure game but then, the adventure is more substantial than most! Still, they are well drawn and colourful and compared to the graphics in a certain other game reviewed in this column, you would think *Red Moon*'s had been written on a Cray!

In the game, you play the one brave magician who takes upon himself the task of recovering the crystal and as such you have the option of using magik so long as you possesses the correct objects and this feature works quite well. Because of the weight restrictions imposed on you and the necessity for other non—magical items, you have to be careful about where you use certain spells and when to disregard them. In using spells, the command is CAST, followed by the spell's name and the direction in which it is to be cast, for example: CAST SCOOP WEST. Before a spell may be used, its 'focus' is required, each spell having an attachment to a particular object such as a pearl for the SNOOP spell, which lets you look into a nearby location. Here, the weight restrictions force you into the traditional adventurers bane – the darting back and forth between locations in a frenzy dropping and picking up required objects. This is when you really begin to appreciate the type ahead!

In addition to magik, *Red Moon* also incorporates combat where you pit your strength (or hit points) against various assailants like rats and guardians, using such weapons as daggers, swords or magical cloaks. Once a combatant has been killed, however, they are so totally out of the game that you can't even examine them to see whether they had any other information to impart – obviously, dead men don't tell tales.

The problems are not too difficult and logic will always find an answer for you, given time. But it is the atmosphere that gets you! As with all Level 9 adventures, the location descriptions are copious and detailed, adding enormously to the unfolding story line. So atmospheric are they, that the locations seem half lit and there's a fantastic effect of constantly being watched. I could have stayed up all night playing *Red Moon* (but the guys at the office threw me out). I have no criticisms worth mentioning when it comes to this game; it's a perfect example of how to write a graphic adventure. No gimmicks, fast, intelligent. Buy it.

**Atmosphere 92%**
**Plot 90%**
**Interaction 86%**
**Lastability 84%**
**Value for money 89%**
**Overall 94%**

# ASHKERON

### Mirrorsoft, £5.95 cass

Mirrorsoft have been attempting to make themselves a credible software house for some time now. So it was with some enthusiasm that I opened the *Ashkeron* package at the office yesterday. The game is a mixed graphics and text adventure of the fantasy genre which, at first sight, has some rather interesting features.

The game arrived neatly packaged in a standard cassette sized box with transparent cover and full colour inlay. However, Mirrorsoft have still got quite a way to go, regarding computer adventure games and that fact is typified by this game. Without sounding unfair to Mirrorsoft, I do not want to spend too much time commenting on *Ashkeron*, as it was, quite frankly atrocious.

The plot is the usual offering, a quest to be completed within a certain time limit. The reward? The hand of your Princess in marriage! Okay, don't fall over with the shock. It's far more sensible to start off simple; there's more chance of doing the job well.

All the more amazing that Mirrorsoft got it totally wrong!

The game consists of mixed text and graphics display but there's nothing to become excited about here. The text is simplistic and the graphics are appalling. It's terrible to have to be blunt about games like these. It would be much easier to use such phraseology as 'fell short of their aspirations.' It doesn't sound so bad. But it gives the impression that it nearly made it. There's no way *Ashkeron* nearly makes it to anything other than the bin.

The logic is terrible. When night falls, the views are still shown in daylight and when you die it sometimes says that you have lasted several days. The vocabulary is either embarrassingly small, or the input routines are up the creek because the game hardly understood a word I said. One gimmick which ought to be a saving grace, is the fact that moving can be handled by a joystick. This should have speeded things up a little but because the graphics window uses primitive screen scrolling, getting anywhere takes ages anyway.

There may be some interesting puzzles in the game somewhere, but they aren't really worth finding. The whole affair seems amateurish and half-finished. *Ashkeron*, I'm afraid, isn't destined for anything other than oblivion.

**Atmosphere 28%**
**Plot 25%**
**Interaction 22%**
**Lastability 17%**
**Value for money 23%**
**Overall 20%**

You are at the south side of a moat in front of the Wizard's castle. All around is forest.
Visible exits are south west east north.
Day dawns.

# AN INCENTIVE TO DO IT YOURSELF ADVENTURES

## STOP PRESS

Just hold it a minute. This article cannot go to press in its present condition. Why? Well, there are two reasons. First of all, despite our great editor's strong convictions on the matter, I am not a leprechaun! I'm as English as Muhammed. Anyway . . . the second reason is this. Imagine Owning a disk based Amstrad system. Many of you probably do already. Right then, there is relatively little hope of ever getting Infocom to produce their games on this great machine simply because it isn't big enough in the states. All those Atari and Commodore owning friends of yours probably remind you of this annoying fact from time to time. Jealous? Well . . .

Imagine graphics at least as good as those found on Adventure International games coupled with cassette or disk based adventures (using 128K if necessary), with full sentence multiple command input and disk accessing ability. Imagine being able to write them yourself as stand alone programs, without any programming ability. Imagine the whole package costing around £25. I've seen it. No, I've not been on the poteen! I've just seen the best reason for an adventure games player to invest in an Amstrad.

Everybody has heard of *The Quill* by now. It has resulted in many games appearing from non-programmers and response has always been mixed. To me, it is irrelevant whether games are Quilled or totally original, as long as they're intrinsically good. But *The Quill* and its successors have always had their limitations; basically in the way of interaction with the player. Some professional programs have suffered the same problems, to be fair.

The awkwardly titled *Graphic Adventure Creator* by **Incentive** is about to change all of that. If you're using a standard 64K machine, the program leaves you about 25K in which to construct your game. It's so efficient that this is more than enough to work out an adventure of decent size. A better version will be available to access the extra memory from RAM expansions or the CPC 6128 and all of them give you the option of creating a true disk-based adventure. I should explain at this point that the version shown to me this afternoon was unfinished. There are bugs to be sorted out but it did work and do everything that it was supposed to.

We played a small sample adventure which already existed on the disk. The graphics were nothing short of stunning. They wiped anything I've ever come across on adventures for home computers into the ground. Then, we discovered the vocabulary and syntax flexibility. The result was easily as stunning as anything ever seen on an Infocom game. Yet the most astonishing fact of all was that the whole system was ridiculously easy to use and would still work out considerably cheaper than the equivalent *Quill/Illustrator* which is the only other package coming anywhere near to *GAC*'s specifications. As for speed, don't worry. It is incredibly fast. If anything it's faster than its predecessor.

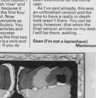
**Graphics first then.** *GAC* uses the high—res four colour mode for the top half of the screen. However, with mixed colouring and shading you can get about ten colours on any one screen from a palette of twenty six, plus background. Apart from drawing, which is accomplished by the usual method of dragging a cursor around the screen, there are presets of elipses and rectangles which can be the same size as the graphic display itself. Editing the graphics is easy but there are so many details of this and other features, that much will have to be left for a proper review. There is a FILL command but it's rather unusual. Depending on where the cursor is located, only certain areas of the region will be filled on a given implementation of the command. Apparently, a proper FILL command was tested but eventually left out due to memory restrictions and the fact that this one is faster. The graphics certainly don't suffer by the result.

**Text input** is another strong point of *GAC*. Vocabularies can be as large or as small as you require. Words are placed in the table in alphabetical order so as to improve search time. *GAC* can accept words of any length as well. This is a significant improvement. *The Quill* couldn't distinguish between 'river' and 'rivet' for instance, because it only responded to the first four letters of each word. Now authors can be as versatile as they like with vocabulary. You can put in definite articles and adverbs so the interpreter doesn't just analyse the first two words thinking one is a verb and the other is a noun. If you do decide to go for two word input, then because of this feature, even something like 'LAMP GET' will be understood.

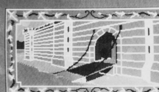
If you knew exactly how an adventure was done, right down to each individual command, you could type them all, in full English, as your first move and then watch the adventure play itself right the way through to its end. Considering these features are available for cassette users as well, it seems that one of the greatest hurdles met when trying to sustain an atmosphere in a game (ie interaction) has been overcome for the home user.

As I've said already, this was an unfinished version and the time to have a really in-depth look wasn't there. You can be sure, however, that when the final version arrives on my desk, I will be there, waiting . . .

**Sean (I'm not a leprechaun) Masterson**



**Two sample screens from the mini-adventure RANSOM which should appear on the final version. This gives you something simple to get your teeth into right from the word go. Pity they're not in colour — you wouldn't believe the quality!**



# ROBIN OF SHERWOOD The Touchstones of Rhiannon

**Adventure International, £9.95 cass**
**Authors: Mike Woodroffe, Brian Howarth, Teoman Irmak**

Having had previous dealings with the Commodore 64 version, I thought I knew what to expect from *Robin of Sherwood*. There are some similarities but there are also some areas where the two versions differ.

The plot, based on the TV series, involves you, as Robin of course, searching for the Touchstones mentioned in the title. They are important for various reasons which are not necessary to go into here. In fact, the game is a quest for everything; your equipment, your comrades and even Marion, your prospective spouse!

You start off in typical Adventure International fashion, stuck in a dingy dungeon in Nottingham castle (being stuck in a room is typical — not the fact that this one is in Nottingham)! Once you get out of there, the game lets Will Scarlet and Much the miller's son (who had been imprisoned with you) escape, but your hard work is only just beginning.



© 1984 H.T.V. Ltd. Goldcrest Films and T.V. Inc based on the series by Richard Carpenter.

Graphics on Adventure International games tend to be above average but then they don't have the volume of pictures that you would find in a Level 9 game so it's really a case of you pays yer money and takes yer choice. Still, some of the views are quite stunning considering their relative unimportance to the game and I thought they were marginally better implemented on the Amstrad version than on other machines. However, there are also some which have gone missing from this version for no apparent reason. This is quite annoying because although machines like the Commodore are more thoroughly understood, due to the fact that they have been around so long, the Amstrad is a more powerful machine and could have easily handled an equivalent amount of screens. Is this lazy translation from Adventure International?

One of the great stumbling blocks for Adventure International games is that they have generally inferior vocabulary to that of their competitors. Unfortunately, nothing has changed on *Robin of Sherwood*. Ten minutes after you have figured out how to do something, you're still going to be trying to get the game to understand you. There's really no excuse for this and it is surprising that AI have never really taken the problem in hand. They certainly could improve their games if they wanted to.

Screen layout is the now familiar one Brian Howarth has employed ever since the days of Digital Fantasia, with the lower half displaying the scrolling text, and the separated upper half containing the graphics. The location descriptions are short, relying on the graphics for atmosphere, and 'seen' objects are often to be really seen in the picture above. Fortunately, there is a good EXAMINE, and this tends to be essential to further the action.

The difficulty level is well set, despite some frustrations due to vocabulary problems, but my overall impression was of disappointment that they had not done more with characterisation and plot sophistication. However, the game isn't bad and in fact fans of the TV series would probably find it a worthy addition to their collection despite its limitations. For anybody else; well, you could do worse than have this game but there are more rewarding challenges awaiting you in other games. All in all, if you can spare the money, then buy it — but don't make it a top priority.



**Atmosphere 70%**
**Plot 61%**
**Interaction 63%**
**Lastability 56%**
**Value for money 68%**
**Overall 70%**



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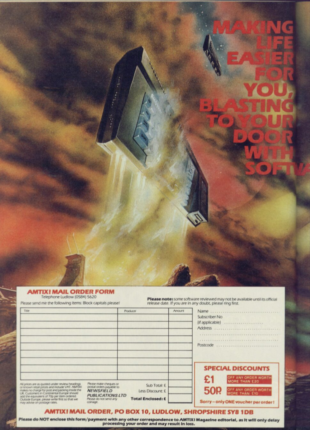
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# GREMLINS

**Adventure International, £9.95 cass**
**Author: Brian Howarth**

Based on the famous film, *Gremlins* first appeared in the early summer of this year on various rival machines but has only now appeared on the Amstrad. As it's one of Adventure International's better efforts of late, this is no bad thing. You play the part of Billy, the youngster who was given a Mogwai as a pet by his eccentric but inventive father as a Christmas present. As in the film, you were tricked into maltreatment of the furry little creature and now Kingston, the small town where you live, is threatened by a rampaging horde of Gremlins.

You have to wander around the town collecting the equipment necessary to defeat the gremlins before the situation gets hopelessly out of control. There is a time limit in terms of the number of moves you can make before they overrun the town. Most of the ideas are taken from scenes in the film but they have been modified to avoid making the whole affair too easy. There is a constant fascination for the speed at which the gremlins work and the feeling of desperation at the overwhelming odds created by their numbers. Some of the methods of gremlin extermination are really sick, though. You start to think you might stand a chance after all, once you have practised your culinary abilities on them with the microwave oven.

The display is pure Howarth again, with stunning graphics in the top half of the screen, and a scrolling text window at the bottom providing location descriptions so short that without the pictures there would barely be an adventure to play. Unlike *Robin of Sherwood*, there are graphic displays for every location (that I got to — didn't quite manage to finish it, I admit). The graphics are exceedingly well presented though unlike the Spectrum version there are no amusing animations. That's a shame. I used to love watching the gremlin in the food blender — whoops! Mustn't give too much away. The lack of animation does not detract from the atmosphere, however. The likenesses of the little horrors and the winter locations are remarkable considering the four colour limitation.

Actual communications with the computer are not as contrived as on some other Adventure International offerings, though there is still the limitation of two word input and the vocabulary is still slightly unfriendly when it comes to accepting words. By and large, I managed to make my point often enough however, without having to spend ten minutes per command trying different word structures. Not bad for an AI game but nowhere near Infocom's standard (ah, if only Infocom type games would appear on the Amstrad). There can be odd moments of ambiguity regarding *Gremlins* but that really reflects the nature of some of the puzzles and to examine them now would give too much away. Then again, the whole thing could be an illusion created by the strain of writing this column for Jeremy *and* doing all the other things around here like feeding the busker, drinking vast amounts of old flatulence bitter . . .

Anyway, you should find this game worth your attention. It's witty, has some excellently deceptive ideas which means that even if you have seen the film, you won't be able to solve the adventure overnight and it is presented to Adventure International's usual high standard. The game isn't that massive as the graphics eat up much of the memory but then again, it's not the size that matters as much as how well constructed it is. *Gremlins* offers a game well pitched in difficulty, which is to say that it's easy to play without being obvious all the while.




**Atmosphere 81%**
**Plot 69%**
**Interaction 64%**
**Value for money 76%**
**Overall 77%**

```
I'm in a living room. Things I see:

Christmas Tree. Sword on wall. Open door
PELTZER remote control. GREMLIN. Kitchen

Exits: UP

1983 Warner Bros. inc. I have
company.... GREMLIN Throws Dart!
---WHAT NOW ? D
O.K.
---WHAT NOW ? ■
```

```
I'm in a Bedroom. Things I see:

Gremlin Pods. Chicken scraps. Flashlight
GREMLIN throwing Darts.

Exits: DOWN

company.... GREMLIN Throws Dart!
---WHAT NOW ? D
O.K.
---WHAT NOW ? U
O.K.GREMLIN Throws Dart!
---WHAT NOW ? ■
```

**NOW IT REALLY HELPS ME** when I know what I'm supposed to be writing about (no comment please, Big J). At the moment I'm not sure whether this is supposed to be an adventure games column or a book review column as the mighty Spencer has just thrown a couple of books in my direction whilst grunting something about them being my job to review. Cheers, Jeremy. Thanks. I'll just read both of them during my lunch break and present a full synopsis before you can say 'professional suicide.' Alright, let's have a look.

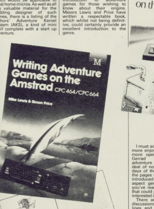
The first one is called *Writing Adventure Games on the Amstrad*, by Mike Lewis and Simon Price. Published by **Melbourne House**, it is a medium format paperback, approximately 170 pages long and retailing at **£6.95**. The book consists of essays on the general philosophy of adventure construction which would be applicable to most home micros. As well as all this valuable material for the budding designer of such games, there is a listing of the authors' Adventure Kernel System (AKS), a kind of mini *Quill* complete with a start up adventure.

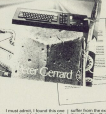
In fact, most of the book dwells on this system, dealing with data compaction techniques and logic. It's designed so that a total beginner to computers could dive in and get programming. I can't tell whether this was intentional but it seems to work well enough. The book is clearly laid out and the listings are well printed. (Incidentally, there is a cassette available if you can't bare extensive listings — details in the back of the book).

It is slightly disappointing in that it concentrates so much on the authors' particular application of their philosophy rather than discussing the principles themselves more deeply, but to be fair, the way it has been written is probably more practical for the majority of users.

It's an entertaining work which approaches the subject from a well thought out, if slightly blinkered point of view. There's an especially interesting introduction to adventure games for those wishing to know about their origins. Messrs Lewis and Price have written a respectable book, which whilst not being definitive, could certainly provide an excellent introduction to the genre.

The second book is published by **Duckworth** (some of whose adventures I will be looking at shortly), called *Exploring Adventures on the Amstrad* (what exciting titles these books have). It is written by Peter Gerrad, the author of*Colossal Cave Adventure* which is Duckworth's version of the original adventure game, made famous on home micros by Level 9. This book is marginally larger than the one above, being approximately 250 pages long yet still only **£6.95**.





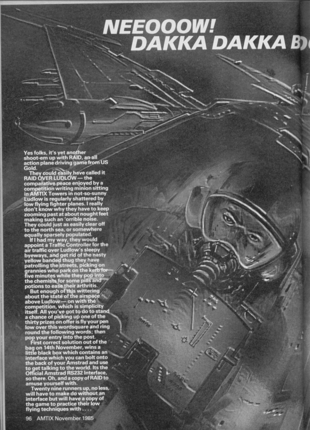

I must admit, I found this one more enjoyable because of its more open ended style. Mr Gerrad obviously adores adventure gaming and a great deal of nostalgia for the early days of the hobby, permeates the pages of his work. You are introduced to the hard work aspect gently and only after you've read through a section that could probably get anyone interested in the subject.

There are some interesting discussions of possible plot lines and gimmicks for your games which are reminiscent of essays in magazines such as *White Dwarf*. There are also three sample adventure listings to whet your appetite but these are written in a style rather than a strict system, as in the Melbourne House offering.

Even so, there are faults associated with this book's attempted universality. There are some sections which really belong nowhere other than the Amstrad manual. This helps explain what's going on for those who have never before learned to program but as all the work is in BASIC, it's hard to justify their appearance here. References to the relevant technical journals would have sufficed.

Both books will probably suffer from the existence of utilities like *The Quill*. Such programs are easier to use and your adventures will run faster on them (unless you can compile your BASIC). However, both these books explain the reasoning behind adventures in in a way that utilities never could and they're cheaper. Both are good as well, but it depends on what you're looking for. If you want to see how a sensibly developed system evolves then *Writing Adventure Games on the Amstrad* is definitely the better buy. If you're looking for flexibility and you are more of a curious beginner then *Exploring Adventures on the Amstrad* is probably more suited to your needs.

# NEEOOOW! DAKKA DAKKA B



Yes folks, it's yet another shoot-em up with RAID, an all action plane driving game from US Gold.

They could easily have called it RAID OVER LUDLOW — the comparative peace enjoyed by a competition writing minion sitting in AMTIX Towers in not-so-sunny Ludlow is regularly shattered by low flying fighter planes. I really don't know why they have to keep zooming past at about nought feet making such an 'orrible noise. They could just as easily clear off to the north sea, or somewhere equally sparsely populated.

If I had my way, they would appoint a Traffic Controller for the air traffic over Ludlow's sleepy byeways, and get rid of the nasty yellow banded thug they have patrolling the streets, picking on grannies who park on the kerb for five minutes while they pop into the chemists for some pills and potions to ease their arthritis.

But enough of this wittering about the state of the airspace above Ludlow — on with the competition, which is simplicity itself. All you've got to do to stand a chance of picking up one of the thirty prizes on offer is fly your pen low over this wordsquare and ring round the following words; then pop your entry into the post.

First correct solution out of the bag on 14th November, wins a little black box which contains an interface which you can bolt onto the back of your Amstrad and use to get talking to the world. Its the Official Amstrad RS232 Interface, so there. Oh, and a copy of RAID to amuse yourself with.

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# STRATEGY

## CONCEPTS OF CONQUEST

*Hot from his exertions in the adventure grotto with the leprechauns, SEAN MASTERSON dons a tin hat and looks at the state of strategy games, and at two in particular.*



**AR AND STRATEGY** gaming represents one of the strangest of all genres in the computer gaming world. Such games are rarely best sellers, even more rarely do they achieve 'household name' status such as *Space Invaders*, yet they continue to be written and always maintain an avid following. Why? In the very early days of home computers and even before then, graphics and sound capabilities were fairly limited. Nobody had ever dreamed of *Elite* or anything of that nature. However people still wanted to create games. The first adventures appeared. They now hold their own in the gaming field. Their appeal was something totally new. Infocom called it 'interactive fiction' and it was bound to capture people's imaginations.

Strategy games were already in the making but they took far longer to emerge from the depths of the mainframes than the other games. They are typified by Chess, one of the oldest wargames in the world. Chess programmers could not afford to teach their machines the rules of the game and nothing else. If they did and you were playing against such a machine, even the poorest player would soon see victory within his grasp. The Chess program would know, at any given point in the game, which legal moves it could make and so it would select one, probably at random. The result would be utter chaos because the computer would not have been taught how to win.

The programmers realised that the computer would need a series of priorities to examine before it made any move. Those priorities would then have to narrow the computer's choice until there was only one viable move for any given situation on the board. So expert systems were developed from a gaming point of view. This was a useful thing to happen anyway, as games are an excellent medium for testing the validity of expert system philosophy. That is important because good ES is considered to be the poor man's artificial intelligence, consequently it was an area worthy of research.

As the games and expert systems evolved (and by now quite a few powerful systems were in the hands of the military), the spin offs began to appear in the imaginations of other game designers and the first home wargames appeared using the same design processes as those early Chess programs. Role Playing Games such as *Dungeons & Dragons* had yet to create much of an impact on the domestic games market, but wargames already had a strong following. They had even achieved massive public appeal with games like *Diplomacy*. There were intense arguments over whether playability should take precedence over authenticity as games of strategic size could take months to play to their end. Using the by now, relatively cheap home micros to do all the hard work in providing, refereeing and analysing wargames was an obvious move.

Like Chess, wargames cannot be mastered overnight (unless they are exceptionally bad). They tend to hold little appeal from the point of view of instant playability and reward. However they have more potential for maintaining interest and providing a challenge for a player who enjoys a battle of wits and logic. Just from an abstract aspect, the attraction of such games is obvious. But beyond this abstract analysis, there is the challenge of seeing if you, with the gift of hindsight, could have changed the course of history in terms of all of humankind's greatest conflicts.

This particular side of gaming is what has drawn most people to the hobby at some time or another. It has egotistical overtones, granted, but these are not necessarily unhealthy. Very few people enjoy killing for killing's sake when playing a wargame (unlike a shoot em up arcade game). In fact many games make casualties a large factor in victory conditions; and so they should. This avoids the dilemma of pyrrhic victories. Indeed, there is a long standing school of thought that wargaming, apart from training the mind's ability to analyse complex logical problems, actually creates pacifists. The concept being that a realistic wargame could show someone with imagination, how much harm they could cause by making careless moves. A little idealistic perhaps, but you might be surprised at how many wargamers adhere to that philosophy.

Of course, for people like myself, who have enough trouble simply holding a joystick the right way round, let alone winning an arcade game, the wargame provides a chance of me beating the computer. It might take a while, but it's an effort worth pursuing!

Now, of course there are many abstract and subject specific strategy games available, no matter what computer you use. The Amstrad range has some way to go before attracting the big names like SSI to produce games on their machines, but there are alternatives. Fantasy and science fiction wargames provide something new and take away some of the vicariousness which might worry someone confronted with a Falklands War scenario. The strict nature of the games has been changing also, over the past couple of years. One of the most underrated games to have been put onto the Amstrad was *Alien*. Most people see that as a graphic adventure but in reality, it owes far more to a historical simulation than to any other type of game.

I expect this trend to put old fashioned concepts into new, more exciting packages to continue. The result will be a bridge in the gap between different areas of gaming and more variety for the end user. With enough memory, the computer will be able to produce more accurate scenarios in enough variety to satisfy almost everybody's tastes. One day they might even get a challenging and unabridged version of Go on the market.

Go, for those of you unfamiliar with how the orientals spend most of their free time, is the oldest game in the world. It's also far more complicated than Chess. The board is cross-etched with nineteen by nineteen points, giving a playing area of three hundred and sixty-one points. These points, not the squares they surround, are where the players place their stones. The stones are the playing pieces and there are approximately a hundred and eighty of them for each of the two players. Players move alternately, with one stone per move. Stones are only placed on the board or removed from the board (as a result of capture) so the game's flow comes from the apparent expansion of each player's army (group of stones).

The object of the game is to surround points of territory with these armies; the person with the most points at the end of the game is the winner. Points may also be earned by the capture of enemy stones. This is achieved by surrounding the stones in question. The only rule of the game is that you may never play a stone directly into a suicide position (ie one where the stone would be instantly surrounded). In fact, there is a detailed exception to this rule, but it need not be discussed for our purposes. The point is that Go is the ultimate strategy game. Its rules are terribly easy to understand yet the successful application of them in play takes professional students of the game, a lifetime of practice. The successful design of a full, competent game of Go for home computers is a greatly sought after goal as the expert system involved is horrendously complicated. But who knows what the future holds . . .

Finally, a mention about this particular column and how it works. Strategy games have their own unique criteria by which to be judged and therefore the ratings system has to change accordingly. **Presentation** is very similar to the same category elsewhere in the magazine. It's a consideration of everything from the loading screen to the availability of game options and clarity of the rules. **Graphics** is a consideration of both the quality and effective use of graphics in the game. However, it is not a comparison of arcade game graphics. **Complexity** is the most important of the ratings in that low or high complexity does not reflect the quality of the game. It is simply an expression of the extent to which the game provides a challenge. **Authenticity** is an expression of how accurate the scenario is either in historical terms, or, as would be the case in a fictitious game, its source (whether it be book, film or history provided with the game). **Lastability** expresses the

reviewer's opinion of how much the game has to offer and whether or not you can conquer it in one session! **Overall** is simply how it grabbed us. Now read on . . .

# ARNHEM

**CCS Ltd, £9.95 cass**
**Author: Bob Smith**
**KEYS ONLY**

This is the first wargame on the Amstrad by Cases Computer Simulations (unless they have been particularly quiet in the past) and they've picked a difficult subject with which to kick off. 'Operation Market Garden' is one of the most difficult subjects from the last war anyone could try to simulate. In late 1944, Montgomery's plan was to liberate Holland in one great push, thereby opening the road to Germany — and beating his rival Yank generals to it to boot. Because of the country's geography, there were a series of bridges leading roughly eastwards towards the Rhine, which held great strategic importance. These, Montgomery suggested, could be taken by air before they were destroyed by the Germans. Thus began one of the most complex and ultimately ill-fated Allied offensives in the latter part of World War Two. There were five bridges to be taken by British and American paras; the furthest of these was at Arnhem.

The game features five complete scenarios offering differing complexity by their relation to the whole campaign. Up to three players (American, British and German) may take part. Alternatively only one player need play, taking responsibility for the Allies whilst the computer plays the Germans. Each scenario is designed to be completed in a certain number of turns and each turn is divided into three phases. The phases allow motorized (or any mechanical) units to move and enter combat twice as frequently as their non-mechanical counterparts. Combat between two adjacent units is automatic but movement depends on terrain.

The display is of a scrolling map type with the usual information windows present. Units are displayed only by symbols until they enter combat, when a slightly more explanatory icon takes their place. Information gathering is not really that necessary as there is no limited intelligence feature and you can only move over whichever parts of the map are relevant to your scenario.

Units are given full identification (which as far as I can tell, is accurate) and orders may be given when the cursor is above them. Reports may be accessed at this time and they reveal details of a unit's strengths and weaknesses (in game terms) and tell you whether that unit has attacked or not. Units' potential combat effectiveness can be accurately calculated from this information because the game itself seems to employ relatively simple techniques for fighting. This is a good feature on a beginner's game and that, I feel, is what this game is.

There are problems however. When moving units, the cursor doesn't let you plot where you like and then tell you your move is impossible, if you break any rules. It assumes that you know what you are doing and automatically places the unit whenever you run out of movement points. In other words you can't pick up the playing piece and then decide where to put it down. The display is also very poor. The map is legible but scrolls appallingly. Combat is slow if units far apart are given their orders together. And the stacking display is non-existent, often causing confusion by its absence.

*Arnhem*'s packaging is really quite good, with appealing artwork, a well printed and laid out instruction book, complete with interesting historical notes. It is really spoiled by the atrocious display and the speed of combat resolution in complex scenarios. If you can put up with those faults the game itself plays well (once you are familiar with its one or two quirks) and could provide a sound, if unimpressive, introduction to wargaming.

**Presentation 64%**
**Graphics 41%**
**Complexity 38%**
**Authenticity 73%**
**Lastability 58%**
**Overall 54%**

# VAGAN ATTACK

**Atlantis, £2.50 cass**

Remember ZX80s? Of course you do. They were little white boxes that had the barest modicum of computing ability and you once had to pay a hundred pounds for them! Those were the days, eh? You could spend about five or six pounds inventing a strategy game based on *Star Trek* and have fun for hours playing something that could have come straight from a mainframe. Of course, some bright spark found a way of making computers more powerful whilst still keeping the price low and yet more complex games began to appear.

These hadn't got the charm of the early games. Their complexity was beyond that necessary to have fun. They were challenging, graphically imposing and had depth and scope. You could play them for months instead of minutes. So it's really reassuring to see that some software houses still bring out the old favourites and charge at least as much as they used to for them, despite the plethora of more sophisticated titles available. Sorry, are you experiencing deja vu?

*Vagan Attack* is, if you haven't guessed already, one of the 'your ship is the only hope for the galaxy' type games. Limited sound effects, prehistoric graphic displays and primitive keyboard interaction all send you tumbling through a backwards journey in time. If your imagination is great enough, you may get a kick out of turning harmless, two dimensional star systems into black holes (singularly or by the dozen, the choice is yours) but others will almost certainly appreciate the nauseatingly overwhelming stench of nostalgia whilst playing this game.

There are nine levels of play, cryptically named after various astronomical phenomena, that do provide something of a challenge, if you can stand the pace. There is even a hyperspacial travel effect a la George Lucas, et al . . . The instructions provide the greatest challenge as they are practically non-existent. Otherwise this entire game is itself a black hole in disguise, surrounded by a **non**-event horizon. But to be fair, I happen to know that this is a very old program, that when it first appeared on the machine for which it was originally written, it was something to be proud of, and its programmer can hardly be blamed for its anachronistic appearance now on the Amstrad.

**Presentation 28%**
**Graphics 11%**
**Complexity 21%**
**Authenticity 7%**
**Lastability 9%**
**Overall 13%**

## MOON BUGGY

*ANIROG*
*£7.95 cass*

*Moon Buggy* is a version of the well known arcade game 'Moon Patrol'. In control of a Moon Buggy you can move forwards or backwards and you have the ability to jump over hazardous terrain. As well as dangerous terrain to negotiate, there are also different types of aliens to destroy. As you progress through different zones of the moon the game gets harder, with tougher terrain and hordes of aliens.

*Moon Buggy* has managed to capture all the playability of the original but sadly the graphics and sound stop it from being an excellent conversion. The game is highly playable and very addictive; the progressive difficulty means that it is a challenge and remains so for quite a while. A good conversion with some nice features but a lot could be bettered.

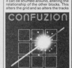
**Overall AMTIX! rating: 63%**

## CONFUZION

*INCENTIVE*
*£6.95 cass*

Having recently located the Confuzion bomb factory you have taken it upon yourself to destroy every bomb housed therein. The bombs lie on the edges of the assembly rooms of which there are 64.

To destroy a bomb you must guide a constantly moving spark throughout the maze to it. This is not as easy as it sounds. Each assembly room is in fact a grid of square blocks etched with a curving path. One block does not exist and you have control of it, so it can be shuffled around, altering the relationship of the other blocks. This alters the grid and so alters the tracks




that the spark can go along. There is a time limit imposed before bombs explode, and on later screens not only does the layout become very complex, but there are water drips falling down the screen which may extinguish your spark.

It can take quite a while before you get the hang of it and this can be quite off-putting at first. It's worth persevering though, because *Confuzion* is a fun game to play that proves highly addictive. The graphics are not outstanding but they do their job effectively. If you like fast moving, frustrating computer puzzles then you can't go wrong by buying *Confuzion*.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 81%**

## DALEY THOMPSON'S DECATHLON

*OCEAN*
*£8.95 cass*

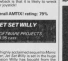
Ocean's *Decathlon* was a big hit on both the Spectrum and CBM 64 and happily the Amstrad version is better than both of them. As the title suggests there are 10 events: 100m, long jump, shot putt, high jump, 400m, 110m hurdles, discus, pole vault, javelin and 1500m. To make Daley run, you must waggle the joystick from side to side — the faster you waggle, the faster he runs. Each event has a qualifying time which goes up each time you compete in that event.

*Decathlon* is a very good conversion of the arcade mega hit 'Track and Field' with the benefit of having some extra events thrown in. Both graphics and sound are good making for a reasonable game and it's very playable and highly addictive. If you like this sort of game then you can't do much better than buying it. The only drawback is that it is likely to wreck your joystick!

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 79%**

## JET SET WILLY

*SOFTWARE PROJECTS*
*£8.95 cass*



The highly acclaimed sequel to *Manic Miner*, *Jet Set Willy* is set in the huge mansion Willy has bought from the fortune made in the mines. After one long and rather expensive party Willy is ordered by the paranoid housekeeper maria, to clean the mess left by the jolly partygoers before he will be allowed to go to sleep in his bed. Having only just bought his mansion, Willy still doesn't quite know his way around his 64 room 'pad'.

*Jet Set Willy* is another classic platform game, one that innovated the 'exploring' arcade/adventure idea. The massive playing area keeps you hooked just because you want to see the next room. The graphics are attractive and reasonable but nothing to jump over the moon about, but their strength lies in the way all the screens link up to form the mansion. There are some neat twists in this pattern game but once you have seen all the rooms it rapidly tends to lose some of its appeal.

**Overall AMTIX rating: 79%**



# MACADAM BUMPER

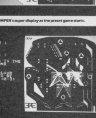
**PSS, £7.95 cass**

Pinball table simulations have managed to weave their way onto most home micros, probably an indication of programmers' misspent youth roaming the arcades. Now appears *Macadam Bumper*, first of this genre to reach the Amstrad. Licenced from french software house **Ere Informatique**, PSS's *Macadam Bumper* contains all the pin table features and options found in the arcades.

The first thing to appear is an amazing loading screen of a punk in trendy attire bent double over an active pin table. The screen loads in as a block of memory and takes a good five minutes to appear. Once loaded a menu presents itself, replete with options.

Attacking the program at its lowest level, a mere pinball simulation, you choose the play option. It soon becomes apparent that the programmer has really tried to recreate a pin table as accurately as possible because the first thing you need to do is press the insert coin button. Press start and the table sets itself it up just like a real one. You have control over left and right flippers plus nudge left and right keys. To start, hold down both flipper keys and the spring with steel ball on top will

MACADAM BUMPER's super display as the preset game starts.




Putting together a new pinball table with the editor.

pull itself tighter. When you think you've got the correct tension let go and the ball hurtles itself to top of the table. The nudge keys are the equivalent of giving the table a good bash to try and stop the ball from disappearing down the hole. Hold a nudge key down for too long and you go into 'tilt' and then you cannot operate the flippers. When using nudge the screen shakes violently and ball is swayed from its course.

Also included is a comprehensive screen editor allowing your dream table to be conjured up on the small screen. The editor is split into two sections, the Options screen plus the




actual Editor. The Options screen allows fine tuning of various options that affect the way the game plays. You can alter how bouncy the cushions are or change the maximum ball speed. The point system is also flexible, allowing the user to change how many points should be awarded for various events.

The Screen Editor is an all or nothing affair. The machine allows only one screen to held in memory at once so it would be wise to save out the default table before trying to change anything. If you change an object, it stays changed. The editor displays the preset objects on the right hand side of screen and the keys used to select them. If you want to create any of your own objects then you can the use the draw keys. Pressing CTRL in conjunction with these keys will cause them to rub out instead. Once your masterpiece is complete you can save it to tape.

PSS are running a competition for any budding pin table designers. The best design they receive will win a genuine pinball table.

**Control keys:** definable.

## CRITICISM

**1** **This game has the best loading screen I've seen to date, although it does take ages to load. As pinball games go this is quite a good one – the demo game is playable but I couldn't see myself playing it for more than a few goes. Once you get bored of the table provided you can define your own pretty easily. Graphically this one isn't anything to write home about but they do their job and as for the sound, it could be a little more realistic but it is also adequate. I wouldn't go out and buy this game simply because I don't think pinball was made for conversion onto computers, I'd much rather play the real thing in the local.**

**2** Though not overly keen on this type of game, *Macadam Bumper* made a great impression from the start with what has to be the best

# GAMES INDEX

## SUPER PIPELINE 2

*AMSOFT/TASKSET £8.95*

As Foreman Fred it is your task to keep the Pipeline in good working order to allow all the barrels, at the bottom of the screen, to be filled with water from the tank at the top. If your pipe should develop a leak then the water will flow out through that and you must guide one of your team of workmen to the leak to repair it. Why should holes develop? Because the pipe is infested with a variety of unpleasant creatures, some of which bore holes in pipes and all of which kill your workmen and even yourself if you're careless.

You have a gun with which to protect the pipe and workmen from the nasties. Some of the nasties such as the tacks can't be killed so they have to be avoided. There are special appearances by the Six legged Venusian Pipe Spider, which shouldn't cause too much trouble, and the Hard case lobster, this can only be shot from behind.

*Super Pipeline 2* is a very playable game which should have most people addicted quickly. The graphics are good and the movement is smooth. When a pipe is completed you get a funny interlude while the characters go and do something stupid. One final point is the sound, it is very good. *Super Pipeline 2* is immense fun to play and deserves to be in anyone's collection.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 86%**

Super Pipeline II

## MINDER

*DK'TRONICS £9.95 cass*

The popular TV series, Minder, has been brought to you courtesy of DK'Tronics. As Arthur Daley you must make as much money as you can within the 14 day limit. You start the game with £2000 and a small selection of goods to sell. How you trade is up to you but as long as a profit is made it hardly matters.

There are several locations that can be visited: The Lock-up, a garage where all your goods are stored; Terry's flat, Terry can often be found here (he's even useful occasionally); The Winchester club, this is where the main business takes place; Dealers' premises, this is where you can sell your goods.

The Winchester Club is the central location of the game, here you can do all your buying and some selling.

*Minder*, in some ways, is an adventure. Most of your input is conversational but there are some cases where you only need one-key commands, normally when moving about. The 'vocabulary' for trading is reasonably extensive and enables you to stage quite complex deals. Using the wide vocab you can order drinks at the Pub and ask Terry to do jobs for you such as collecting or delivering goods.

When dealing you may find that you have purchased faulty or even stolen goods. If they are faulty and you have sold them to a dealer you may find that Terry returns with less money than you originally agreed to sell the goods for. Should your goods be stolen then Sgt. Chisholm starts his enquiries. If he catches you with them then you may be fined heavily. To avoid capture you could get Terry to dump the goods for you but otherwise it is advisable to sell them off quickly.

Although the graphics in *Minder* are quite good, on the whole it looks a bit boring. When you actually play the game you find it rapidly becomes absorbing, more due to the vocabulary than to the action, and addictive as well. On the whole this is an excellent game of its type (trader/strategy).

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 76%**

## PYJAMARAMA

*AMSOFT/MIKRO-GEN £8.95 cass*

Poor old Wally is having a nightmare but can you help him out of his dilemma? As Wally's sleeping alter ego you must search his nightmarish mansion for the alarm clock key and then go and wind the clock up — but in nightmares nothing is that simple; certain everyday objects tend to increase in size and they seem hell bent on obstructing your progress. Otherwise poor old Wally will be late for work and will be given the push by the nasty mean gaffer.

To get the key you must solve a variety of puzzles, such as getting past the snapping plants, and how DO you get the box key? Some puzzles are straightforward, you just need a certain object to complete them but other puzzles are much more complex, you will need to find and then free a certain object which in turn will help you solve another puzzle.

The graphics are big and rather chunky but on the whole they look quite good. *Pyjamarama* is instantly playable and quite tough to solve (but not as complicatedly involved as the follow up, *Everyone's a Wally*), but once it is solved, you probably won't play it much more. A good game but it's doubtful whether it will keep people hooked for long.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 61%**

## 3D INVADERS

*AMSOFT £8.95 cass*

This is a conversion of the first arcade hit *Space Invaders* the main difference between this and the arcade original is the 3D perspective used. You sit at the bottom of the screen moving your laser cannon left or right and shoot the rows of aliens that descend the screen slowly. You have 3 barriers to protect you from the alien fire but these can be shot away.

'Space Invaders' is definitely old-hat now and this variation on the theme is boring and repetitive. Both graphics and sound are very poor as is the whole game, especially at the price.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 10%**

loading screen graphic on an Amstrad to date. It really is amazing. Loading screen aside, the game is quite good as well. Even though the inertia and gravity is a little bit unrealistic, with the ball doing strange and unlikely things at times, *Macadam Bumper* is very playable indeed. The editor is a good idea though the implementation lets it down. Allowing only one screen in memory at once, the editor can be a bit tricky to use allowing not much room for mistakes. After erasing the left hand barrier by accident a strange little bug appeared. If you fire a ball onto the table it's then likely to bounce all over the score board. Overall a good game, despite the editor's inefficiencies, though I feel a lot more could be achieved with this type of game.

3 *Game 'construction sets' seem to be catching on, what with* The Quill *for adventurers, and a recent range of 'kit' games from Ariolasoft on the 64, many of which I hope we'll soon be seeing out soon for the Amstrad.* Macadam Bumper *is what I would call a very slightly missed attempt, which is to say that it's really very good, but it left me with the feeling that it could be a fraction better in some respects. The game you get is fine, but in itself won't hold attention for ever, and the real essence of the program, the editor, is a bit weak and slightly unfriendly, which is a pity, since it stops this from being excellent. Of course, there's the argument that you may not enjoy playing pinball, but if you do then* Macadam Bumper *is good value and a lot of fun can be had with it.*

**Presentation 78%**
Packaging a bit naff, though the menu and editor options more than make up for it.

**Graphics 81%**
An amazing loading screen plus some nice on screen statics make a good impression.

**Sound 68%**
No tune though the sound effects are above average.

**Playability 82%**
Very playable, holding onto all the hooks that makes arcade pinball fun to play

**Addictive Qualities 62%**
Fun to start with though interest may fade after a short length of time.

**Value for Money 83%**
A very reasonable price for a good piece of software

**Overall 78%**
A passable attempt to bring the appeal of the pintable to the small screen.

## THE ROCKY HORROR SHOW

*CRL*
*£9.95 cass*

Based on the hit play and film of the same name CRL has brought the humour of the movie to the small screen. Your task as either the hero Brad or heroine Janet is to rescue your boy or girl friend (who you are and who you have to rescue depends on the choice you make at the beginning of the game) from being turned to stone by the dreaded Medusa machine operated by the equally dreaded Dr Frank 'n' Furter. To do this you must find and assemble all the pieces of the Demedusa machine before the time limit runs out and the house blasts off into space, but all is not as simple as it sounds.

As well as coping with laser barriers, locked doors and a freezer room you must deal with the inhabitants of the house. Some are quite friendly and just steal your clothes or say lines out of the film but others like the manic depressive butler, Riff Raff, quite happily kill you — it's up to you to discover for yourself who is and who isn't friendly. The Amstrad version of *The Rocky Horror Show* looks and plays exactly the same as that on the Spectrum, the only difference being that here there is an annoying flicker. There is a good version of the *Time Warp* song playing throughout (thankfully this can be switched off by those who hate games with continual sound).

Generally, the game is quite fun to play but it doesn't take many people long to complete it. Not bad value for money but no long term interests in this.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 69%**

Rocky Horror Show

## KNIGHT LORE

*ULTIMATE*
*£9.95 cass*

Recently you have been afflicted by a strange disease which, when the full moon appears, has the effect of turning you into a werewolf, half-man, half-wolf. Deep inside the strange castle is the wizard, Melkhior, within forty days and forty nights you must seek his help to rid you, Sabreman, of the fateful curse lest you are to remain a wolf for ever.

In the centre of the 128 room castle is the room inhabited by the ageing wizard and his cauldron. Should you enter the room as a human then a spell will rise from the cauldron and flash which object you should collect to put into the cauldron. A total of fourteen objects (scattered at various places throughout the castle) must be placed in the cauldron and only then will you be healed.

The graphics in *Knight Lore* are incredible, some of the best to be seen on any micro. On the Spectrum, this game broke new barriers in programming, happily the Amstrad version has improved on the original by using a two colour scheme for the breath-taking 3D rooms. It can take quite a while before you've mastered the knack of negotiating the hazardous obstacles, spikes and malevolent spells can quite easily dispense with Sabreman and his wolfish alter ego, and even then you've still got the time limit with which to contend. *Knight Lore* uses a revolutionary technique called Filmation, which allows the character you control to interact with objects by pushing them around. This means that you can do a lot of things, for instance, if there is a ledge that's just a bit too high to jump onto then you can move an object and jump on that to gain extra height. *Knight Lore* is one of the best arcade/adventures for the Amstrad and is definitely worth getting hold of; the only problem is that movement tends to slow down quite a bit when there is more than one moving object on screen.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 91%**

## GHOSTBUSTERS

*ACTIVISION*
*£10.95 cass*

*Ghostbusters* was claimed to be the best selling game of last year probably due to the superb rendition of *Ghostbusters* (the song) generated throughout the game on the CBM 64, and also because of the hit film. The Amstrad version has many of the features of its CBM counterpart including the music. On first looking at this game it appears to be very good but everything goes downhill once you start to play.

The idea is very simple an essentially follows the film idea. A strategical element requires you to equip your team with vehicle and spook traps from a limited cash allowance. Then it's a question of guiding your little spook hunters round New York and capture the ghosts. There's a large map screen showing the streets, infestations and your position, a scrolling road scene, and several buildings where the spooks may be caught. How many ghosts you capture all depends on your skill and what equipment you bought at the outset. For each ghost captured you receive a variable amount of cash.

Should you have accumulated $10,000 or more by the time the PK level reaches 9999 and the 'Lock' and 'Keymaster' have united at The Temple of Zuul, then the scene cuts to the Temple where all the trouble is centred. Here you must guide at least 2 of your 3 ghostbusters past the prancing Marshmallow Man and into the Temple to finish the game. Whether you are successful at getting the required amount of ghostbusters past the Marshmallow Man or not, you will be given an account number (only if you have made over $10,000) which can be used at a later date to buy more equipment.

The music is quite good but rapidly becomes annoying after you have heard it continuously for an hour or so. The graphics are reasonable but the scrolling of your car, when travelling between buildings, is absolutely awfull. The only real plus to the game is its instant playability and that makes it quite enjoyable for a while but there are no addictive qualities and it ends up being very empty.

Particularly reccommended to younger gamesters.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 57%**

# RAID

## US Gold, £9.95 cass

*Raid* is a conversion of the controversial CBM64 classic *Raid Over Moscow*. The object of the game is to stop the American cities from being blown up by Russian nuclear missiles which have been launched from bases deep behind the Iron Curtain. The game has five different sections and each one has to be completed to allow you to progress to the next.

You start the game in a space station high above America. Once a missile launch has been detected you are told the location of launch and time before it reaches its target. To prevent this awful calamity you have to pilot a shuttle craft down behind Russian lines and destroy the missile's silos, which if done successfully will cause the missile warhead to malfunction and detonate harmlessly.

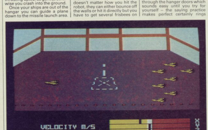
You first job is to fly as many shuttles into the surrounding airspace as your skill will allow. Your craft takes off automatically and you have to guide it through the hangar doors. It's not as easy as it sounds since you're pointing away from the door when you take off and controlling the plane is rather tough. There are quite a few factors that you have to keep an eye on when you're flying in the hangar – don't thrust forward too much, otherwise you may crash into a wall; and keep thrusting upwards gently, otherwise you crash into the ground.

Once your ships are out of the hangar you can guide a plane down to the missile launch area. This isn't at all hard, you just have to make sure that your plane lands on the flashing area. Once you have reached the ground you have to make your way across the hazardous Russian territory in a sort of 3D *Scramble* fashion. You can fire at objects using your laser, pretty vital since the Russians don't take your presence there too kindly. There are plenty of ground objects to avoid along with laser firing tanks and missiles.

If you manage to get through this then you reach the five, barrel-like silos. To destroy one, just put a bullet into its tiny entry slit. You have to destroy the tallest central silo to nullify the missile warhead. The four smaller ones don't play a part in the progress of the missile, but give extra lives if destroyed. On completion of this section of the game, another missile launch is detected and has to be dealt with in similar fashion.

Once all the missile silos are destroyed you have to enter the Kremlin and destroy the reactor room within. Gaining entry is pretty tough as you can imagine, with snipers and tanks following your every move. Armed with only a bazooka you have to shoot every sniper and tank whilst avoiding their bullets. You have to be swift though as when you kill a sniper another takes his place pretty quickly.

Once all the snipers have been killed you can enter the reactor room. Here a robot follows a preset course round the room as it checks all the reactor rods. You stand at the bottom of the screen and sling frisbees at it (well, that's what they look like). It doesn't matter how you hit the robot, they can either bounce off the walls or hit it directly but you have to get several frisbees on target before the robot is destroyed.




If the robot *does* get destroyed then you are presented with a screen showing the Kremlin blowing up and you're told how well you did and given a bonus for the number of lives left.



## CRITICISM

**1** *Raid Over Moscow* on the 64 was one of my favourite games for quite a while and it kept me enthralled for weeks as I worked out the best tactics to beat the enemy single handed. On this version the graphics aren't as good as I expected them to be but they are still commendable. The gameplay is harder than both the Spectrum and 64 versions and it'll definitely be quite a while before you can finally crack the game. I really liked it and it's one of the better shoot em ups I've seen on the Amstrad.

**2** This game is quite difficult to start with, your first task is to fly as many of your planes as possible out through the hanger doors which sounds easy until you try for yourself – the saying practice makes perfect certainly rings true at this point. Don't be surprised if you don't make it as soon as you would have hoped, it **is** hard. However, once you have got your planes out and you're down on the ground from there on it's straight forward and is great to play.

**3** *I remember, many CRASHes ago, before Gary Liddon came here to annoy us, the release of* Raid Over Moscow. *The excitement and cheer that this game brought to the Spectrum user was wondrous. Now US Gold have altered its name and ported it over for us Amsters to drool over. Graphically* Raid *is an improvement over the last conversion from US Gold,* Beach Head *which was a grave disappointment. The flying sequences are a bit slow but quite acceptable. What does seem to have happened is that the emphasis of the game has shifted. In the Spectrum Version getting the aircraft out of the hangars was difficult but not nearly as hard as destroying an enemy silo. Now in this version you can spend all day getting a couple of aircraft out and just a minute doing in a silo. It seems that not only have they performed surgery on the name but on the game as well.*

**Presentation 78%**
Nice loading screen, standard packaging, usual options but . . .

**Graphics 74%**
. . . the hangar graphics are disappointing, the rest is above average although nothing special.

**Sound 55%**
Mostly white noise spot FX.

**Playability 58%**
Generally fun to play, but too hard to get easily into . . .

**Addictive qualities 72%**
. . . although once you're out the action is hot enough to offer medium lastability.

**Value for money 76%**
A bit pricey for what it finally offers.

**Overall 75%%**
An above average shoot em up that may appeal to fans of the genre, but US Gold can do lots better.



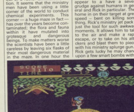
# ON THE RUN

**Design Design, £7.95 cass**
**Author: Graham Stafford, Stewart Ruecroft**




Design Design are a quiet, well mannered, unassuming bunch of hooligans who come round to the Newsfield Towers and pinch our sweatshirts. In the past they have gained quite a reputation as games producers with titles like *Dark Star* and *Tank Busters*. *On the Run* was conceived in a public house and written in some dark and sleazy backroom in Manchester.

The game follows a short, but heroic period, in the life of one Rick Swift. Rick has volunteered to get the defence department out of a rather awkward situation. It seems that the ministry men have been using a little corner of the world to conduct chemical experiments. This corner — a huge maze in fact — has over the years become contaminated; the flora and fauna within it have mutated into grotesque and dangerous beings. To make matters worse the scientists have been a little careless by leaving six flasks of their most dangerous material in the maze. In one hour the flasks will degrade so allowing their lethal contents to do unbelievable damage. Rick must explore the maze and recover all six flasks in the 60 minutes available.

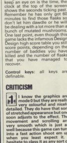


The ministry has equiped Rick with a special suit to protect him against the chemicals and the mutants. However, the suit only affords limited protection because the mutants damage it, with each mutant contact the energy bar at the top of the screen diminishes; eventually to the point where the suit is rendered useless and poor old Rick passes on. If Rick is careful he can keep his suit in good nick by finding magic mushrooms which have the effect of restoring the suit's energy level. The mutants come in all shapes and sizes, some move slowly and almost ignore you, others appear to a have a severe grudge against humans in general and Rick in particular. They home in on their target at great speed – bent on killing something. Rick's ministry jet pack is just the tool for such awkward moments. It allows him to take to the air and make a rapid escape, or to take on his attackers and blast them to pieces with his ministry splurge gun. If Rick gets lucky he may chance upon a few smart bombs within the maze, these can be picked up and kept for those occasions when he stumbles into an area full of baddies.

Collecting the flasks is almost sure to require that Rick explores the entire maze but he can only get into some areas of the maze if he has collected an object from another section. The frogs that guard the entrance to each section decide if he has the correct object or not. You see there are a very large number of collectable objects just waiting to be picked up, the problem is that Rick has to learn the hard way which he should touch and which he should leave alone.

Apart from the energy bar there are six empty flask slots sitting at the top of the screen, as Rick recovers each flask it is inserted into one of the slots.





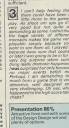
Should Rick become the proud owner of any smart bombs then they will also be stored up there waiting to be used. The one thing that Rick must not forget to keep an eye on is the time, the clock at the top of the screen shows the seconds ticking past. Remember he has only got 60 minutes to find those flasks so don't let him dawdle or he will be dealing with a lot more than a bunch of mutated mushrooms. One last point, even though this game lacks the infamous Design Design high score table you still score points, depending on the number of baddies you have killed and the number of flasks that you have managed to recover.

**Control keys:** all keys are definable.

## CRITICISM

**1** **I know the graphics are mode 0 but they are really very colourful and nicely detailed. They do have that sort of stretched appearance but one soon adjusts to the effect. The movement and scrolling are very smooth which is just as well because this game can turn into a fast action shoot em up when you least expect it. I hesitate to class it as any sort of arcade adventure even though you are expected to collect objects. I defy anyone to show me the logic involved selecting the objects that are needed to get from one section to another. A very straight forward and attractive game.**

**2** I saw this game a couple of months ago on the Spectrum and I was very impressed with it then. Now, having seen the far superior version on the Amstrad, I am amazed with its graphics and sound; I could sit and play it for hours just to see all the different characters and foliage. Controlling your bloke is fairly easy until you get into close combat with the larger nasties, then you find out that fine movement is impossible so your energy is drained very quickly. Finding the objects to get past the frogs is a waste of time as picking up any objects in the search for flasks is sufficient.



**3** *I can't help feeling that there could have been a little more to the game play. As shoot em ups go it's very good but not quite as demanding as some. I admit that the huge variety of different monsters makes the game very playable simply because you want to see them all. I played it because Iwas sure that sooner or later I was going to be in for a very big surprise when something really dramatic happened; I* **was** *surprised but only because no major events befell me. Perhaps I am demanding too much from a game that is very attractive, well designed and very challenging. Oh yes, what happened to the high score table chaps?*

**Presentation 86%**
Attractive front end with some of the Design Design wit and plenty of options.

**Graphics 92%**
Clever use of colour to give the graphics boldness and some very original sprites to boot.

**Sound 72%**
Effective spot effects, would have been nice set to music.

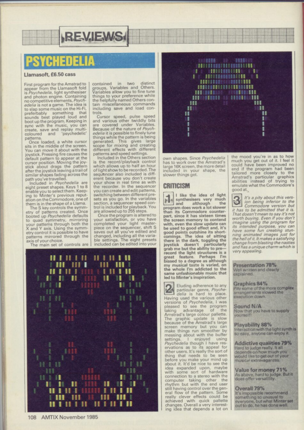
**Playability 91%**
Easy to get into, great fun to play and really very hard to beat, bad luck Rick.

**Addictive qualities 87%**
Difficult, compelling and fantastic characters, plus loads of screens to keep you at it.

**Value For Money 88%**
A lot of action and visual interest for a reasonable price.

**Overall 89%**
A very different game from Des Des, worth adding to your collection.


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# PSYCHEDELIA

**Llamasoft, £6.50 cass**

First program for the Amstrad to appear from the Llamasoft fold is *Psychedelia*, light synthesiser and photon engine. Containing no competitive elements, *Psychedelia* is not a game. The idea is to slap some music on the Hi-Fi, preferbably something that sounds best played loud and boot up the program. Keeping in sync with the music, you can create, save and replay multi-coloured and 'psychedelic' patterns.

Once loaded, a white cursor sits in the middle of the screen. You can move it about with the joystick. Pressing fire causes the default pattern to appear at the cursor position. Moving the joystick about drags the pattern after the joystick leaving a trail of similar shapes fading across the path you've travelled.

Included in *Psychedelia* are eight preset shapes. Keys 1 to 8 enable you to select them. Keeping to Minter's previous reputation on the Commodore, one of them is in the shape of a Llama.

The S key controls the symmetry of patterns created. Once booted up *Psychedelia* defaults to quad symmetry, mirroring your patterns through both the X and Y axis. Using the symmetry control it is possible to have patterns mirrored through the axis of your choice.

The main set of controls are contained in two distinct groups, Variables and Others. Variables allow you to fine tune things to your preference while the helpfully named Others contain miscellaneous commands including save and load controls.

Cursor speed, pulse speed and various other twiddly bits are covered under Variables. Because of the nature of *Psychedelia* it is possible to finely tune things while the pattern is being generated. This gives large scope for mixing and creating different effects with different patterns and speed settings.

Included in the Others section is the record/playback control which allows up to half an hour of light show to be recorded. The sequencer also included is different because you don't create your show in real time as with the recorder. In the sequencer you can create and edit patterns, switching between different presets as you go. In the variables section, a sequencer speed control is included for playback. You are allowed up to 255 steps.

Once the program is altered to your satisfaction, or you have completed your light masterpiece on the sequencer, shift S saves out all you've edited and changed, including all the variable settings. The eight presets included can be edited into your own shapes. Since *Psychedelia* has to work over the Amstrad's large 16K screen, the more detail included in your shape, the slower things get.

## CRITICISM

**1** **I like the idea of light synthesisers very much and although the program does work a lot slower than its Commodore counterpart, since it has sixteen times the screen memory to contend with, even the slow update can be used to good effect and, it's good points outshine its shortcomings. The idea of sitting there in the dark, toggling the joystick doesn't particularly grab me but the ability to pre—record the light structures is a great feature. Perhaps I'm biased to a degree as although my musical taste is varied, on the whole I'm addicted to the same unfashionable music that led to Minter's inspiration.**

**2** Eluding adherence to any particular genre, *Psychedelia* is hard to place. Having used the various other versions of *Psychedelia*, I was pleased to see the program taking advantage of the Amstrad's large colour pallette. The graphic update is slow because of the Amstrad's large screen memory but you can make things run smoother by messing about with the buffer settings. I enjoyed using *Psychedelia* though I have reservations as to its appeal for other users. It's really the sort of thing that needs to be seen before you make your mind up about it. It'd be nice to see the idea expanded upon, maybe with some sort of hardware connection to a stereo with the computer taking other the rhythm but with the end user still having control over the general flow of the pattern. Some really clever effects could be achieved with quick pallette changes. Overall a very interesting idea that depends a lot on the mood you're in as to how much you get out of it. I feel it could have been improved no end if the program had been tailored more closely to the Amstrad's particular graphics abilities instead of trying to emulate what the Commodore's good at.

**3** *It's a pity about this version being inferior to the Commodore version but it has to be admitted that it is. That doesn't mean to say it's not worth buying. Even if you don't imagine using the program for its intended purpose, you can have some fun creating stunning animated images just for the hell of it. It makes a satisfying change from blasting the nasties and has a unique charm which is very appealing.*

**Presentation 78%**
Well written and clearly explained.

**Graphics 84%**
Pity some of the more complex arrangements slowed the execution down.

**Sound N/A**
Now that you have to supply yourself!

**Playability 88%**
Interaction with the light synth is so easy, anyone can enjoy it.

**Addictive qualities 79%**
Hard to judge really. It all depends on how much you would like to get out of your musical extravaganzas.

**Value for money 71%**
As above, hard to judge. But it does offer versatility.

**Overall 79%**
It's impossible recommend something so unusual to everyone, but what Minter set out to do, he has done well.


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# Can YOU survive a day with DESIGN DESIGN? Then prove that YOU ARE as daft as THEY ARE.

## Oh, and there's 30 copies of ON THE RUN for the luckier ones who don't win outright!!

AMTIX! COMPETITION

One of the good things about working in Ludlow is the quiet village-like atmosphere – well quiet, apart from the builders working on the Buttercross, the huge lorries trying to fit through the narrow roads and the Traffic Warden having the occasional fits on motorists. Oh yes and one other little snag is Ludlow's apparent proximity to Manchester – home of the Design Design mafia.

Now nobody would dispute that Simon, Simon and Graham are a nice bunch of guys it's just that they do seem to do quite well out of us for clothing. Every time they come down to Ludlow they raid mail order and walk away with armfulls of sweatshirts, T-shirts and caps and anything else that isn't nailed down. All this despite the brave resistance put up by mail order auntie, Carol. We had hoped that they might pay for their wardrobe by buying more than a few rounds down at the at the Wheatsheaf. Not a chance. So instead we came up with the idea of getting a competition out of them and now we intend to use it to expose them for the bunch of loonies that they are.

We employed the services of a private detective. His brief was that he should follow Design Design for a couple of weeks, and, if anything untoward should happen then he must get photographic evidence. Well, after only a few days they managed to drive an Astra down a Cliff, engage in an elastic band fight with our dear Ludlow traffic warden and then get their car keys locked in a briefcase, the combination of which had been changed.

We intend to use this competition to locate the best Amster Loonies and send them up to see Design Design for a day; thus giving Simon, Simon and Graham some of their own medicine. One of our loonies will be the person who sends in the four funniest captions to the four pictures printed below. The second loony will be the person who sends in the funniest caption of all. So, the first two prizes, if you can call them that, will be a mystery day out with Design Design. We also have thirty copies of ON THE RUN to give away to the runners up, but really that can only be called second best compared to a day out with Design Design. Can't it?

When you think you have worked out your captions, whizz them off to us on a postcard, or the back of a sealed envelope listed Pic 1, Pic 2 etc, to ***DAFT AS DESIGN DESIGN, AMTIX! MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB*** to arrive no later than 14th November. Don't forget to put your name and address on the entry, either, or you really will look like a loony.



Pic 1

Pic 2

Pic 3

Pic 4

Just to show that we are not as daft as Design Design would like to think we are, we have forced them to judge the entries, so best not to say anything rude about them, know what I mean.

## ROLAND ON THE ROPES

*AMSOFT/INDESCOMP*
*£8.95 cass*

Being the intrepid explorer Roland you have entered a vast and mysterious tomb. You find yourself at the bottom of the maze and you must endeavour to climb to the top and find the way out. On your way up you encounter many hazards and monsters that try to make your life harder. Every time you touch one of these hazards your energy drains and if you are not careful you could die.

To help you get out, you can jump over the energy-sapping rats and shoot at the ghosts. The only drawback is that you have a limited amount of bullets in your gun and shooting the ghosts only frightens them. The only way of gaining more energy is by finding the magical vases full of the Elixir of Life.

*Roland on the Ropes* is quite an old game now. First it was out for the Spectrum and called *Fred*, the Amstrad version soon followed but it was not a major improvement over the original. The graphics, while being quite acceptable, scroll jerkily and can be off putting. The game itself is quite fun to play at the outset but soon becomes tedious after a couple of tombs have been completed. *Roland on the Ropes* probably has a greater appeal for younger players but it's doubtful whether arcade addicts will enjoy it for long.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 43%**

## MILLIONAIRE

*INCENTIVE*
*£6.95 cass*

You have just written a computer program that you consider is up to the market standard but what do you do with it? You must make all the decisions and to start off with you have £500 but can you build up to a million in this financial strategy simulation?

Your first major decision will be whether or not you should specialise in a particular area and if so which. To help you off the ground you can sell your first program to make extra capital. After that all the decisions are all your own but if you get into real difficulty you could always take out a loan or see Honest Harry.

As each month goes by a graphic representation of your offices is presented and as you get richer the offices become more lavish. Then a status screen with details of sales, stock and money appears. After this there is a graph showing monthly sales of cassettes. The next screen is where you decide what you wish to do for that month: Programming, another game is added to your list; See Honest Harry, HH can help you get rich quick by supplying you with cheap programs and tapes but he isn't always on the right side of the law; Try to sell products to retailers, this will help to boost sales; Convert existing programs to other machines, your programs will increase by 1; Try to obtain a loan, only £1000 may be borrowed a month and there is a 10% monthly interest rate, and finally there is Sell Out which also ends the game and gives you various ratings as to how well you did. The more successful you become the more problems you encounter.

To help boost the sales of your games you have 5 ideas but you must be careful how they are used because they can only be used once. Two of them are free but the others must be paid for. Every month there is a news item and this can effect your sales depending on whether it is beneficial to you or not.

There is something about *Millionaire* that just appeals to a lot of people. It's hard to put a finger on it but it is certainly not the graphics or sound! *Millionaire* is certainly extremely playable (besides typing in the name of your company everything else is just 1 keypress), it is also very addictive, good fun to play and should appeal to strategists as well as the plain greedy and ambitious.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 76%**

## TANK BUSTERS

*DESIGN DESIGN*
*£7.95 cass*

Sitting at the controls of an advanced Battletank you look out on the battlefield of the future. Your mission is to defend the asteroid you have been asigned.

The tank is equiped with a defensive shield (this is depleted every time you are hit by an enemy missile) and two different types of weapons. The first is a conventional cannon, it fires high velocity armour piercing missiles. These can destroy an enemy tank with one hit. The second type is a guided missile. When these are fired you control them with the left and right controls. It is possible, before the game begins, to select a view from the missile, which means that when a missile is fired the display switches to a view as seen by the missile. However, when a guided missile is in flight, you cannot control the tank.

Your sight serves two purposes: obviously it can be used as a sight but it can also be used as a radar with you at the centre and enemy tanks represented by green dots. Using your sight you can easily seek out and destroy the enemy.

'Battlezone' is now quite an old type of game but *Tank Busters* brings back new life to the old arcade favourite. True to the original, *Tank Busters* has fast, smooth moving vector graphics. A lot of the game is user definable, the keys, the skill level and the type of game plus much more. This is playable, very addictive and in all respects, an extremely good game.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 81%**

# LOCOMOTION

Somebody's got this little train into a spot of bother on a closed loop!

### Mastertronic, £1.99 cass

*Locomotion* from Mastertronic features the infamous London to Madrid train race (come on, you've heard of it . . . ), and you control the British train. The underhand dealings of the other countries reached an all time low last year when they removed your track, so this year it's up to you to lay the track as you go. Obstacles have been laid along the route including trees, cars and rocks and must skillfully be avoided. Your only help is a panic button which slows the train to a snail's pace, giving you time to remove the obstacles from your path. But the panic button won't last for ever since you only have a minute's worth of panic time.

Scenario aside, *Locomotion* is very similar to the sliding block puzzles that where popular before Prof. Rubik came along. Each block contains a section of track, either a bend, a straight section or a crossroad. Some blocks contain obstacles, highlighted in red, which derail your engine and cost you a life. The idea is to get the train to travel back into the sidings it started from and travel over as many blocks as possible. When a block has been travelled through it changes colour from green to yellow. If the train hits a piece of track that has no end, the train is likely to blow up in a nasty red explosion. The course can be changed as the train trundles along but you can't move a block the train sits on.

The panic button is very handy indeed. On the top right of the screen is a graphic that looks similar to a guard's pocket watch. Pressing fire causes the watch's second hand to tick, highlighting in green how far round the second hand has travelled. Press fire again and the ticker stops. For the whole while you are holding the fire button the train slows right down to give precious moments to ponder on possibles solution.

Placed around the track are squares containing coal or water, when travelled over they add bonus points to your score. If you manage to get the train back into the sidings you started in then the blocks you've changed to yellow will each be worth a bonus point. The game finishes if you are clumsy enough to derail a train or if the time runs out from over use of the panic button — or if you finish of course.

## CRITICISM

**1 I saw this one first on the Spectrum and I was quite impressed, especially with the loading screen but alas this has no loading screen. Otherwise it is a very good conversion and if you like this sort of game you'll love *Loco-***

*motion.* **The train it very well animated as are the sections of track that you move around the screen. Unfortunately there are several tunes in the game which are possibly the worst I've ever heard on a computer.**

**2** The great strength of *Locomotion* lies not in the graphics, which are certainly adequate but definitely not exciting and could hardly be classed as 'innovative', but in the game idea, which is as simple as pie and as confounding as the riddle of the universe. The train moves quite slowly, you may think, until it approaches a piece of track that you haven't yet rearranged, and then, as if to prove Einstein correct, everything appears to speed up! It may take a few attempts, but screen one holds few problems unless you are after a high score, when you may want to cover more squares than is actually necessary, but the second screen is already a nightmare, and there are 10 to get through! A great little game at a price no one can complain about.

**3** *I can't say that these sort of puzzle games really appeal to me very much, but* Locomotion *does have something going for it. Not the graphics or the sound, but the idea does work rather well, and provides some harmless fun likely to induce a state of mild panic as your train crashes time after time. I wouldn't spend hours playing it, although I did find it surprisingly addictive while I did, and any game that you have to force yourself to turn off in order to get on with something more serious (like alien zapping), can't be all bad.*

**Control keys:** all definable

**Presentation 61%**
Nothing special, and sad they left off the loading screen

**Graphics 60%**
Simple and chunky, but do their job smoothly

**Sound 35%**
Several tunes — but what tunes!!

**Playability 59%**
After a moment's confusion, it's plain trucking and fun . . .

**Addictive qualities 65%**
. . . but the frustration of later screens is for puzzle fans only.

**Value for money 76%**
There's quite a bit of game for £2

**Overall 63%**
A neat budget game, but almost certainly appealing best to puzzle fans.

## WAY OF THE EXPLODING FIST

*MELBOURNE HOUSE*
*£9.95*

Melbourne House's karate simulation explodes on to the Amstrad. As a young grasshopper you must work your way up from being a complete novice to achieving the magical 10th Dan. To help you gain this award you have some 18 manoeuvres at your disposal.

The various kicks that are accessable are key movements to success. The flying kick is an extremely powerful manoeuvre that can render your opponent helpless and is best used when the enemy is standing and not kick an enemy in the face but it often takes too long to perform to be effective; two, it can be used to turn your character around — just start the kick and then abort it half way through execution. The last kick, the high back kick, is the reverse of the high kick and is only really of any use if your opponent has slipped past you.

As well as kicks there are 3 punches that may be used. The jab is the most effective and the easiest to use because of the speed with which it can be performed and it is particularly useful in tight spots. The high punch can also be easily executed and is highly effective when your opponent is in close vicinity to you. When in the crouch position a low punch can be dealt to the enemy, again this is a highly effective move but it can be easily countered by a jab kick.

There are two somersaults – for-

**Way of the Exploding Fist**

blocking. Like the flying kick the high kick deals a blow to the face but is risky to use. It can be countered by going into a crouch and using either a low punch or a forward sweep. Both the mid and short kicks are effective in close combat particularly the jab kick. The mid kick is the least effective of the two because it may easily be countered by crouching or by a straight forward block. The forward and backward sweeps are probably the most effective moves in the game. To use them you must first crouch down and then press the fire button and pull down on one of the diagonals of your joystick. A forward or backward sweep can be countered with a short jab kick (but only while the character is crouching) or by somersaulting out of danger. The roundhouse kick has two purposes: one, it can be used to wards and backwards, and a jump that can be used in times of difficulty. The main use for somersaults and jumps is to get out of danger caused by forward or backward sweeps.

Learning how to use each of the moves properly can take quite a few games, but once mastered you are unlikely to forget them in a hurry. The graphics in *Way of the Exploding Fist* are excellent. The sprites are wonderfully defined and the movement of both characters is very realistic. This version isn't quite as good as the CBM 64 game but it is still very good and should provide many hours of enjoyment. The greatest advantage that it has over many others is that it's instantly playable and should appeal to just about everyone.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 86%**

## ALIEN BREAK-IN

*AMSOFT*
*£8.95 cass*

On a lonely planet you must fight against deadly aliens to preserve the shield that covers the planet. Should this shield perish then your planet will be taken over by the alien taskforce.

Sitting at the top of the screen is the indestructible mothership which releases glowing pods. Should a pod reach the shield then it will change into another type of alien. Situated in the middle of the screen are masses of attack bombers. These release two types of missiles that rain down on the shield. If a hole is created in the shield large enough for an attack bomber to fit through then one will fly down through the gap and change into a mothership. When there are enough motherships, they fly down and try to ram into you.

The heat is certainly on with this game and you need a quick trigger finger and instantaneous hand/eye co-ordination otherwise death will quickly be greeting you. *Alien Break-in* is initially very playable but the frustration of being killed can put you off very quickly. The graphics and sound are just about average and add nothing to the game. As shoot em ups go this is one of the most frustrating but it presents nothing new.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 41%**

## FRANK N. STEIN

*AMSOFT*
*£8.95 cass*

As Frank it is your task to put together parts of a monster. These parts happen to be scattered around your mansion but this is no ordinary mansion, for instance you can only go down the stairs and firepoles and how many houses have ice in them or coiled springs to get you up a floor?

There are seven bits of the monster to collect, namely the head, shoulders, arms and legs which all have to be assembled in the right order, from the head downwards. When you have completed your monster you have to activate him, and if you have built him well within the time limit, then the monster won't get too much of an electric shock but if you only just make it in time then he will be very, very angry.

In the first set of rooms there are some light bulbs that, if picked up, will make the clock turn back slightly. The next screen is a sort of 'Kong' variant. The monster stands at the top of the screen throwing things down at you, how many objects he throws at you depends on how quickly you completed the previous screen. You must now guide little Frank to the top of this screen. On completion of this you must again build the monster but the layout of the mansion has changed and you have less time. The game then goes on like this, alternating between between the construction screen and the 'Kong' game while getting progressively harder.

The graphics are only really above average and the same goes for the sound which is limited only to spot effects. *Frank N. Stein* is enjoyable but it's very doubtful that people will be playing it over long periods of time and it is probably more suited to ardent fans of platform games.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 62%**

## MASTER OF THE LAMPS

*ACTIVISION*
*£9.99 cass*

It was a land of peace. But now, the king is gone, and a mischievous band of genies has escaped and is running amuck. Help a young prince prove his mental and physical worth, return the genies back into their lamps and gain his rightful place on the throne.

There are two main parts to the game. The first requires you to navigate through a tunnel formed by rectangles (similar to the hyperspace tunnel in *Dark Star*). If you are successful then you will move onto the second stage. Here you must hit a gong 3 times (this will summon a genie). He blows some coloured notes into the air and you must hit the corresponding gongs. If you complete this stage then you go onto the next tunnel. This process continues until you have assembled the required amount of lamps.

The graphics in this game are only just above average, though the effect generated in the tunnel is quite good. *Master of the Lamps* is immediately playable but easily completed on the lower levels. A moderately fun game that lacks in addictive qualities.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 64%**

# THE DEVIL'S CROWN

The underwater life of a wreck explorer, as he burbles through the ghosties of past memories, is not an easy one.

**Probe Software, £9.99 cass**
**Author: Brian O'Shaunessy**

*The Devil's Crown* is the latest graphic adventure to appear on the Amstrad. You control a deep sea explorer equiped with some kind of undersea buggy, exploring the wreck of an ancient pirate ship. You have to recover a series of treasures hidden around the wreckage in order to win the game. There are problems however.

First of all, the ship is still inhabited by the ghosts of the original pirate crew and they are determined to make your job impossible. Then there are some very intelligent fishes with whom you have to dispense. This is easier than it sounds. And you must find constant supplies of oxygen and weaponry if you are to avoid certain death.

The various objects that are lying around normally help you continue the mission but there are exceptions. A lantern allows you to see in certain rooms which would otherwise have remained totally black, but a Jolly Roger flag kills you outright. Only trial and error (or in our case a phone call from Probe Software) sorts out the good from the bad. You can normally pick up only one object at a time but there are some exceptions to this rule; if you pick up a lantern and then try to carry a bottle of rum, the lantern will be left behind. However, you are entitled to replenish your oxygen supply by picking up an oxygen tank and then picking up a gun to increase your number of bullets and **then** pick up a lantern. Basically, as long as you are only oxygen on you, it will attack and steal almost all your air. If you attempt to kill it, then it will try to avoid your fire. Nasty little pieces of work. Sometimes they have enough air to keep them happy – but beware, this never lasts long.

The ghosts aren't exactly friendly either. When you enter a room with a ghost, it attacks you. At first it's hard to tell just what it is the ghosts do. In fact they actually swap what you are carrying for something else. Sometimes this is actually good because you can suddenly find your oxygen supply being replenished. More often than not, however, they shove a Jolly Roger flag in your paws and it's game over. There is a method of stopping the ghosts from chasing you. Placing a certain object in the same room will make them totally inactive. Won't tell you what that is though!

Initially you are given a message to find three bells. You have to find a room where three bells are flashing on and off. Then you wander around trying find solid bells (ie ones that don't flash). Eventually you must replace all three of the flashing bells with the real ones. Only then does a flashing treasure appear which you have to replace with a real one. There are seven treasures in all, so your work is cut out for you.

The game maintains a fast pace and the graphics are extremely colourful. The game has a strategic aspect in the way you use the various items available. For instance, there are seven dark rooms but only five lanterns so some swapping and carrying is required. You could get through dark rooms which remain unlit but they invariably

replenishing supplies, carrying multiple objects is acceptable.

The fish are definitely intelligent. If there is one in a room with you when you replenish your oxygen supply or even if you happen to have plenty of

contain things you need later on in the game, so you cannot afford to just disregard them.

**Control keys:** A,S Left/Right; SHIFT Fire/Take; ENTER Pause; ENTER (SMALL) Game Reset; ESCAPE Crashes the game!

## CRITICISM

**1** Comparisons are always odious but with this game they are justified nonetheless. From the first moment you see it on your screen, you will think you have bought another version of *Sorcery*. Screen layout is very similar; the sound effect when you pass through the doors is identical and there are even the same number of screens! The plot is original and that is something of a saving grace but the game is doomed to unfavourable comparison. It is unlikely to be seen as an improvement on its classic cousin because of jerky joystick control. The graphics may be colourful but they are confusingly laid out and generally not as well animated as in *Sorcery*.

**2** Well it had to happen, I suppose. *Devil's Crown* is first in what I suspect to be a long line of *Sorcery* clones. The graphics, though above average, are well below the standard set by Virgin Games. Admitedly, the gameplay is of a higher standard than that of *Sorcery* but the implementation and programming standard is just not up to scratch. The joystick response was sluggish and the sprites flickered even though there was never that much moving on screen at any given time. Overall, I wasn't that impressed, especially considering that it's two pounds more expensive than *Sorcery*.

**3** *If you enjoyed* Sorcery *and aren't too bothered about sophisticated appearances then you might enjoy this game but there's no doubt that whatever you thought of the latter,* Devil's Crown *is not as good. The lack of a title screen and any kind of explanation of the plot is most irritating. It does employ some interesting ideas but they're spoiled by inefficient programming. Not a total loss but nothing to write home about either.*

**Presentation 39%**
Easy to get into but no options, no title screen and no finesse.

**Graphics 58%**
Plenty of colour, but poorly animated and drawn.

**Sound 35%**
Unimaginative and sparse.

**Playability 57%**
A sort of accidental friendliness.

**Addictive qualities 51%**
If you're prepared to put up with the game's clumsiness, then it might be rewarding to play to its conclusion.

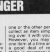
**Value For Money 33%**
Two quid over the odds for what it offers.

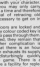
**Overall 52%**
You're probably better off buying *Sorcery* instead.

# DOPPLEGANGER

**Alligata Software, £8.95 cass**







*Doppleganger* is a forced perspective (or 3D) arcade adventure in the same mold as *Knight Lore*. It's one of the first of such games written initially for the Amstrad. The purpose of the game is to recover ingots of gold, silver and bronze and carry them to the start screen. The game is played in a castle and the start screen is the west battlements. You control a sorceress whose quest it is to recover the loot. Exactly why the dosh has to be brought to this particular location is not clearly explained but c'est la vie, eh?

Actually you control the sorceress and her alter ego as two separate characters. An interesting twist, as certain locations in the game are only available to one or the other personae. You collect an item simply by passing over it with your character. However, you may only carry one item at a time and therefore a good deal of retracing old steps is necessary to get on in this game.

Certain doors are locked and the correctly colour coded key is necessary to pass through them. Once opened, they remain that way. Another complication is the fact that there is an hour glass which exhausts its supply of sand disturbingly quickly during the game. There is a room where a facility for replenishing the supply exists, but of course, you have to find it first. Once the supply is exhausted, it's the end of the game. Contact with the various nasties in the game, increases the speed of sand falling through the hourglass during the time you are

A view of the battlements in DOPPLEGANGER.

being attacked. Evidently it is imperative that these be avoided at all times. One of the nasties is a spider; he is the only creature able to kill you outright (that we encountered, there's also supposed to be a Gorgon who could be pretty nasty) and protection against such evil must be sought if you are to complete the game.

The last of the obstacles in your way is the recovery of the loot itself. Some of the ingots are easily accessible at the beginning of the game but others only appear once you have made some kind of progress.

The game is split into twenty five rooms. That isn't a phenomenal amount by any means but the programmer has put faith in the ability of the puzzles involved with moving around to prevent monotony setting in. You only have one life and there is one difficulty level.

**Control keys:** all redefinable.

## CRITICISM

**The central problem with this game is controlling the main character. Joy stick control is abysmal and even using the redefined keys option doesn't prevent confusion from setting in due to the poor implementation of movement. The graphics themselves are very well done with the exception of the main character. You feel like you're moving a Russian doll around as she slides across the floor. The effect of the 'transparent' alter—ego does deserve some credit, however. The sound effects too, are original and apt. More of their kind would grace many another game on the market. The graphics and sound are definitely the highlights of the game, but smooth and colourful though they are, they can't make up for a game which re-**

The two sides to a sorceress, good at the top, and evil at the bottom, while on the right, time is running out.

# GAMES INDEX

## HARRIER ATTACK

*AMSOFT/DURELL*
*£8.95 cass*

*Harrier Attack*, a sort of 'Defender' variant, was one of the first games programmed for the Amstrad but unfortunately it hasn't improved with age.

The aim of the game is to fly your harrier jump jet over the sea and then an island while destroying as many of the ground installations and enemy aircraft as possible. You have a choice of two weapons – either rockets or bombs. Rockets are best used for aerial combat and bombs for destroying the ground targets.

*Harrier Attack* is very playable but isn't too addictive. The graphics are quite poor by today's standards and the scrolling is very jerky, in fact it isn't quite as good looking as the Spectrum original. Sound is limited simply to explosions and flying sounds. Overall *Harrier Attack* is a reasonable shoot em up but only offers the kind of lasting qualities likely to appeal to the younger games player.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 39%**

## STEVE DAVIS SNOOKER

*CDS MICRO SYSTEMS*
*£7.95 cass*

Snooker games have been around quite a while now but few seem to capture the atmosphere quite like CDS's version.

*Steve Davis Snooker* has many new features that haven't been previously built into Snooker games, such as setting ball spin, retaking last shots and deciding how powerful you wish each shot to be. What's more, all the features act in a realistic fashion. So to do the graphics, ball movement and interaction always being critical if such a game is to work properly.

The normal snooker rules apply, and there is an excellent two player option, allowing you to play long head-to-head matches. The presentation is friendly, and makes this easy to get into. The result is almost certainly the best snooker simulation available and one which ought to appeal to snooker fanatics and watchers alike.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 76%**

## GALACTIC PLAGUE

*AMSOFT/INDESCOMP*
*£8.95 cass*

*Galactic Plague* is a sort of 'Galaxians' variant. Your Astro fighter sits at the bottom of the screen, able to move left and right, while you blast away at the aliens that descend from the top of the screen.

This type of game is quite old now and the graphics reflect its age, being only are average — and so is the sound. If you like shoot em ups then this may appeal to you but there is nothing polished in it and nothing original.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 21%**

## THE KEY FACTOR

*AMSOFT*
*£8.95 cass*

Here we have a sort of educational shoot em up. While playing a game, the program tries to teach you the layout of the keyboards. At the bottom of the screen are 8 boxes which all have a different keyboard symbol in them. When an alien is in line with one of the boxes you must press the corresponding key to the one printed in the box and a gun fires and destroys the alien. As you progress, the symbols in the box change more quickly so you have to know the keyboard quite well to get a high score.

The idea behind *The Key Factor* is a good one and it does help you learn the keyboard layout but the game itself is rather boring so interest doesn't last that long. It's reasonable for what it does but a bit too expensive.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 23%**

## FIGHTER PILOT

*DIGITAL INTEGRATION*
*£8.95 cass*

The inlay boasts that only the best can become a Fighter Pilot but with a lot of practice so could you.

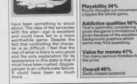
The main idea behind the game is to protect four bases from being destroyed by enemy bombers, but before you can begin this you must first train. The menu offers 3 training modes: you can practice landing; normal flying and combat with the enemy. When you think you are competent at all the above then you can start on the game for real.

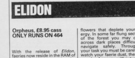
*Fighter Pilot* is very complicated to get into to but once you have mastered the controls and the finesse they require, you are unlikely to forget how to do it. The graphics are of a reasonable quality but they could be better — after all, this game appeared on the Spectrum well over a year ago. However, in many respects this is probably the best flight simulation to date on the Amstrad.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 79%**

**mains unplayable. And the character of the sorceress is just so badly done, it spoils the game terribly.**

**2** I couldn't get anywhere with this game and rapidly got bored with it, despite the promising graphics and interesting sound. There was room to do far more than was actually put into the game and the result is there's just not enough there. It really could have been something to shout about. The idea of the sorceress with the alter—ego is excellent and could have led to a more worthwhile game. Despite the fact that controlling the character is so difficult, I feel that the rest of what is there is very good and the only explanation for its appearance in this state is that it must have been rushed. *Doppleganger* is an unfortunate failure. It could have been so much more . . .





**3** *There's no way to actually fight anything! That really annoyed me. You can protect yourself against some of the beasties but the rest, you have to avoid. Everybody likes being able to nuke something occasionally, and the lack of such ability in this game leaves you really frustrated. Why there couldn't have been a decent way of moving around, I don't know but the result is a really disappointing game. Come to think of it, there aren't even enough baddies to enjoy the scene whilst you're getting killed off over and over again. Ah, well.*

**Presentation 62%**
Neat and reasonably packaged, although rather confusing instructions, but otherwise forgetable.

**Graphics 69%**
Good use of colour and screen layout but spoiled by the bad character drawing.

**Sound 68%**
Very good indeed when there is any but lacking in quantity of effects.

**Playability 34%**
Poorly thought out movement cripples the whole game.

**Addictive qualities 50%**
That's optimistic considering given the game's limitations but given because of the excellent background graphics which some may find appealing.

**Value for money 47%**
Too many serious mistakes for the price.

**Overall 49%**
Sadly missed potential.

# ELIDON

**Orpheus, £8.95 cass**
**ONLY RUNS ON 464**

With the release of *Elidon*, faeries now reside in the RAM of the Amstrad as opposed to the more traditional bottom of the garden.

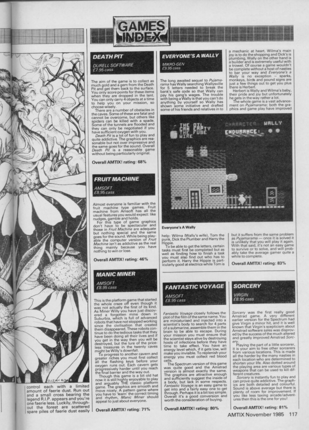
In charge of guiding a humble faerie through the secret forest of *Elidon*, your job is to collect the seven secret potions to water the flowers of Finvara. Once thus refreshed, the flowers are able to grow, enabling you to weave them into a garland fit to grace the head of Queen of the Faeries – such are the drab everyday tasks of faerie folk. The forest of *Elidon* is no safe place though. Throughout there are jealous tree spirits and harmfull flowers that deplete your energy. In some far flung sections of the forest you may come across dark places difficult to navigate safely. Throughout your task you must be careful to watch your faerie dust, the vital supply of energy without which all faeries die.

This first release for the Amstrad from Orpheus is a conversion from the original Commodore program. *Elidon* is a large scale arcade adventure spanning an impressive 256 screens. The screens flip from one to another as you travel between them, each screen containing up to four exit/entrances.

Because of the delicate wings affixed to her back the faerie you are guiding has the power of flight and is able to move in all four directions. Using a control method similar to that used in *Sorcery*, you control the left/right and up movement while the laws of gravity takes care of any downward motion you need to make. Instead the down key picks up objects. Using the fire control allows the faerie to hover.

About the forest you are likely to run into tree spirits that sap your faerie dust. There are three faeries (lives) you are given to






control each with a limited amount of faerie dust. Run out and a small cross bearing the legend R.I.P. appears and you're one faerie less. Luckily, throughout the forest are scattered spare piles of faerie dust easily

## DEATH PIT

*DURELL SOFTWARE*
*£7.95 cass*

The aim of the game is to collect as much gold and a gem from the Death Pit and get them back to the surface. You only score points for these items when they are dropped in the tent. You can only carry 4 objects at a time to help you on your mission, so choose wisely.

There are a number of obstacles in the caves. Some of these are fatal and cannot be overcome, but others like spiders can be killed with a spade. Some of the tunnels are flooded and they can only be negotiated if you have sufficient oxygen with you.

*Death Pit* is a lot of fun to play and quite addictive. The graphics are reasonable but not over impressive and the same goes for the sound. Overall *Death Pit* is a reasonable game without being particularly original.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 68%**

## FRUIT MACHINE

*AMSOFT*
*£8.95 cass*

Almost everyone is familiar with the fruit machine type games. Fruit machine from Amsoft has all the usual features you would expect: like nudges, gamble and holds.

For this type of game graphics don't have to be spectacular and those in *Fruit Machine* are adequate but nothing special and the same goes for the sound. While being playable the computer version of *Fruit Machine* isn't as addictive as the real thing mainly because you have nothing to win or lose.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 46%**

## MANIC MINER

*AMSOFT*
*£8.95 cass*

This is the platform game that started the whole craze off even though it was not actually the first of its kind. As Miner Willy you have just discovered a forgotten mine down in Suburbia, which is full of advanced robots that have not stopped working since the civilisation that created them disappeared. These robots continue to do the tedious tasks that they have been doing all their lives and if you get in the way then you will be destroyed, but the lure of the priceless treasures in the twenty caves might be Willy's downfall.

To progress to another cavern and greater riches you must first collect all the flashing keys before your oxygen runs out. Each cavern gets progressively harder until you reach the final barrier and the way out.

Though this game is a bit old hat now it is still highly enjoyable to play and arguably THE classic platform game. The graphics are smooth and move nicely. A pattern game where you have to 'learn' the correct timing and rhythm, *Manic Miner* should appeal to just about everyone.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 71%**

## EVERYONE'S A WALLY

*MIKRO-GEN*
*£9.95 cass*

The long awaited sequel to *Pyjamarama* has Wally searching Wallysville for 5 letters needed to break the bank's safe code so that Wally can pay his gang's wages. The trouble with being a Wally is that you can't do anything by yourself so Wally has shown some initiative and drafted some of his friends and relatives in to help: Wilma (Wally's wife), Tom the punk, Dick the Plumber and Harry the Hippie.

To be able to get the letters, certain tasks must first be completed but as well as finding how to finish a task you must also find out who has to perform it. Harry the Hippie is particularly good at electrics while Tom is a mechanic at heart. Wilma's main joy is to do the shopping and Dick's is plumbing, Wally on the other hand is a builder and is extremely useful with a trowel. Of course a game wouldn't be complete without a host of nasties to bar your way and *Everyone's a Wally* is no exception – sparks, monkeys, birds and pound signs are just a few things out to get you plus there is Herbert.

Herbert is Wally and Wilma's baby, their pride and joy but unfortunately he gets in the way rather a lot.

The whole game is a vast advancement on *Pyjamarama*; both the graphics and game play have improved but it suffers from the same problem as *Pyjamarama* — once it is solved it is unlikely that you will play it again. With that said, it's not an easy game to survive or to solve, and will probably take the average gamer quite a while to complete.

**Everyone's A Wally**

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 83%**

## FANTASTIC VOYAGE

*AMSOFT*
*£8.95 cass*

*Fantastic Voyage* closely follows the plot of the film of the same name. You are miniaturised and injected into a scientist's body to search for 4 parts of a submarine, assemble them in the brain to be able to escape. During your mission you must ensure that the scientist stays alive by destroying hosts of infections before they have time to take effect. You have an energy level which, if it gets low, will make you invisible. To replenish your energy you must collect red blood cells.

The Spectrum version of this game was quite good and the Amstrad version is almost exactly the same. The graphics are attractive enough and sufficiently suggest the inside of a body, but lack in some respects. *Fantastic Voyage* is an easy game to get into and a fairly easy one to get through. Perhaps it is a bit too simple. Overall it's a good conversion and worth the consideration of buying.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 80%**

## SORCERY

*VIRGIN*
*£8.95 cass*

*Sorcery* was the first really good Amstrad game. A very different earlier version for the Spectrum had give Virgin a minor hit, and it is well known that Virgin's scepticism about Amstrad software sales was disproved by the success of the much altered and greatly improved Amstrad *Sorcery*.

Playing the part of a little sorcerer, it is your aim to free other sorcerers from various locations. This is made all the harder by the many nasties in each location who are determined to shorten your life. Also dotted around the playing area are various types of weapons that can be used to kill different creatures.

*Sorcery* is instantly fun to play and can prove quite addictive. The graphics are both detailed and colourful. Sound is above average but there is plenty of room for improvement. If you like less taxing arcade/adventures then this is the one for you!

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 81%**

## PUNCHY

*AMSOFT/MR MICRO*
*£8.95 cass*

Naughty old Punch has locked poor Judy away in the Punch and Judy booth but brave Bobby the policeman is going to make an attempt to rescue her.

As brave Bobby you must progress through the 16 screens to free Judy. Punch does his best to stop him. On your way to Judy you must jump over gaps in the stage and even jump over Punch himself while dodging the rotten tomatoes and custard pies that are thrown at you.

Once in a while Judy sends a sausage through the air which you must jump up to collect. If you get three sausages then you can skip a screen and go onto the next one but it is worth saving up the sausages for a really difficult screen.

*Punchy* is really a poor version of the arcade hit 'Hunchback'. While the graphics are reasonable they are a bit jerky and uninteresting to look at. The game is very playable but it fails to keep the interest for long. Worth getting if you are really into 'Hunchback', games otherwise forget it.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 35%**

## MR WONG'S LOOPY LAUNDRY

*AMSOFT/ARTIC*
*£8.95 cass*

In his steam laundry, poor Mr Wong is in trouble. He has to collect the clothes but he is being chased by a possessed iron, a sack of laundry and even the soap suds are joining in to make his life difficult.

As Mr Wong, your only protection is a starch gun which, when fired at your enemies, stuns them for a while — but use it sparingly. Mr Wong has to pick up items of clothing one at a time and dump then down the laundry chute which is at the top of this single screen ladders and platform game. When your starch supply runs out a new box appears somewhere for you to collect.

*Mr Wong's Loopy Laundry* is really a very standard platform game, where completing a screen leads to the same set up but with increased hazards. The graphics are average, a bit flickery, and the sound quickly becomes annoying. It isn't very addictive — the sort you will probably play for a while and then forget about, but reasonable if you are a big fan of platform games.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 54%**

## 3D STARSTRIKE

*REALTIME SOFTWARE*
*£6.95 cass*

*Starstrike* is based on the arcade smash 'Star Wars'. There are four main stages to the game. The first is set in deep space as you fight for your life in your fighter craft against the various types of enemy space ships intent on your destruction. The second stage has you skimming a planet's surface dotted with towers and once again you must avoid enemy firebolts while destroying the tower tops and gun emplacements. The third stage, and graphically the most exciting, has you flying down the trench towards the point where you must destroy the planetoid. In this stage you are presented with a 3D view of the trench and as you fly down it you must dodge the catwalks, upright barriers and firebolts while destroying the gun emplacements on the walls. In the last stage you must shoot two revolving cubes in a bid to destroy the planetoid and get a hefty bonus. With each stage the difficulty level increases.

*Starstrike* is probably the best vector graphics game for the Amstrad. The graphics are both fast and smooth and present a realistic impression of 3D. The speed and the well crafted difficulty factors all add up to a very playable and addictive game that should appeal to most people.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 87%**

## AHHH!

*CRL*
*£6.95 cass*

*Ahhh!* is one of those old 'Galaxian' variants that plagued the early Spectrum software scene, in which you are situated at the bottom of the screen and it is your sole aim to survive as many alien attack waves as you can in defence of your home planet.

There are 18 different attack waves to contend with and each type of alien moves in a different pattern. When you have destroyed 3 attack waves, you have to dock with the mother ship to replenish your fuel supply which is being consumed as you move left or right. Should the fuel run out, then your ship is destroyed.

*Ahhh!* is a fun game to play and can prove very addictive; you just want to keep playing to see the next wave. Sadly both graphics and sound are poor and, if anything, detract from the game. If you like a bit of nostalgia then it can be enjoyable but its lasting appeal is doubtful once you have seen all the attack waves.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 35%**

## SPACE HAWKS

*AMSOFT*
*£8.95 cass*

Yet another 'Galaxians' variant but this one only has 8 attack waves. You control a laser gun at the bottom of the screen while at the top there is a large group of aliens that descend the screen both singly and in attack formations.

As 'Galaxian' games go this is a reasonable conversion but as with so many similar games, it's let down by its graphics and sound. One good point, though, about the game is that it is instantly playable and can prove very addictive until you have completed the final wave. Overall, quite a good shoot em up but there is still plenty of room for improvement.

**Overall AMTIX! rating: 46%**





**A refreshing change from alien-zapping in the faerie land created by Orpheus.**

collected by passing over them. Also scattered about the forest are lucky charms, each charm has different effects on your faerie dust supply either decreasing or increasing it.

In the forest are various useful items such as pan pipes or magic leaves to help you on your quest though only three object can be carried at once. The method of picking and dropping helpfull items bears similarity to the way Ultimate do it. For background music you're supplied with the funky bop strains of Ibsen's *Peere Gint* by Grieg.

## CRITICISM

**1** ***Elidon*, converted from the 64, didn't quite live up to the hopes I had for it. Looking at the 64 game it seemed the like the sort of thing that would convert quite successfully, no scrolling, not many things flying about the room. Well, even though the static graphics aren't bad, moving objects seem to have a very bad case of the flickers. Apart from poor programming I can't see any reason why this should be. Having said that, the game elements are really quite good. The puzzles set are of an intriguing nature and hold interest for some time. The map, at 256 rooms, is trifle large and can overawe at times making getting lost very easy. The tune really got on my nerves, though, making me grateful for the Amstrad's volume control.**

**2** I first saw this on the Commodore and was very impressed with its brilliant and colourful graphics. When I learned that it was being converted to the Amstrad I much looked forward to it – with the computer's better colour capabilities surely it would be much improved. Unfortunately it's not, the graphics are very chunky and the flowers are totally unidentifiable. As an arcade adventure goes it's not too bad. It has loads of rooms and puzzles to explore and solve — but it is just let down by its graphics . . . Nice tune though.

**3** *I was really disappointed by this Amstrad version of Elidon.* The graphics though colourfull are nowhere near as good as they could have been, given the imaginative scenario. The shapes flicker and the backgrounds are chunky and not well coloured. The sound is a bright point in an otherwise rather poorly presented game, though it may become irritating after a few games. At least the Amstrad has its own built in volume control unlike other computers. Thankfully, in itself, *Elidon* is a very good arcade adventure and this certainly makes up for most of its inadequacies. I just felt let down by the overall impression that looking at the game gave me that it hasn't been that well implemented in its conversion.

**Presentation 73%**
Attractive and suitably faerie-like.

**Graphics 72%**
Nice and colourful but a bit chunky and flickery.

**Sound 86%**
Good tune but few spot FX.

**Playability 79%**
Easy to get into and jolly to play.

**Addictive qualities 77%**
Plenty to map and lots of puzzles to solve.

**Value for money 70%**
About right for the size of the game.

**Overall 78%**
An unusual game that makes a refreshing change from alien zapping, slightly let down by its appearance.

# THE TERMINAL MAN

THE LINER **ARCADIA** DID NOT EXPLODE IN AN EAR-SPLITTING **WHITE BANG** –

– THERE WAS NO AIR TO FUEL THE EXPLOSION OR CARRY THE SOUND...

...SHE BURNED WITH THE COLOUR OF **BLOOD** – FIERCELY AND SILENTLY CONSUMING HERSELF WITH HER OWN INTERNAL AIR...

WHEN SHE HIT THE PLANET'S ATMOSPHERE SHE CARVED A PRETTY FIREWORK DISPLAY IN THE NIGHT SKY –





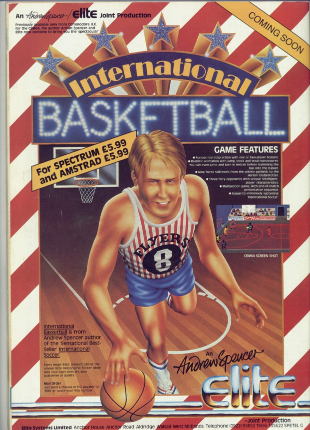


LOOK OUT! THIS WALL'S GLOWING! COULD EXPLODE —
GET AWAY!!!
GET DOWN!!
THERE'S SOMEONE THERE! COMING THROUGH THE FIRE!
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE!
YOU HAVE JUST OBSERVED IT — THEREFORE IT IS NOT IMPOSSIBLE, MERELY UNEXPECTED. DO NOT WASTE TIME WITH IMPRECISE STATEMENTS.
THERE IS CUTTING GEAR IN THE SERVICE BAYS. GET IT AND RELEASE THE PEOPLE TRAPPED IN THE ENTERTAINMENT SECTION. THEN FIND VEHICLES — WE MUST LEAVE HERE SOON.
JUST WHO THE HELL ARE YOU TO GIVE ORDERS, PAL?
YEAH, AND I THOUGHT WE WERE MEANT TO STAY BY THE WRECK AND WAIT FOR RESCUERS...
MY NAME IS CROSS. IT SAYS SO HERE.
CROSS
I AM — WAS — A SHIP'S OFFICER. MY TASK IS TO GET YOU TO YOUR ORIGINAL DESTINATION — EARTH.
NO RESCUERS WILL COME —
— THE ARCADIA HIT AN ANOMALY IN HER LAST JUMP.
— IT LED TO THE BLACK HOLE WHICH ORBITS THAT RED GIANT...
THEN ALL WE GOT TO DO IS FIND A FEDERATION BASE AND...
NO BASES HERE —
LOOK AT THE OTHER SIDE OF THE SKY...


STORY BY KELVIN GOSNELL
DRAWN BY OLIVER FREY
THIS SYSTEM IS A DYSON SPHERE, ITS OUTER WORLDS HAVE BEEN BROKEN UP AND BROUGHT IN TO FORM A SPHERE CLOSE TO THE BINARY STAR,
THE TECHNOLOGY TO BUILD SUCH A THING IS NOT YET AVAILABLE TO MAN AND NONE HAVE EVER BEEN FOUND IN THE MILKY WAY GALAXY. WE MUST FACE THE FACT THAT WE OURSELVES MAY NOT BE IN THAT GALAXY ANY MORE...
WRONG ON ONE COUNT, CROSS. HERE COME OUR RESCUERS. LOOK...
HEY! OVER HERE!
COME BACK. WE CANNOT ASSUME THEY ARE FRIENDLY.
NETMEN— FIRE!
ADVANCE— TAKE THE REST!
CLASSIFICATION HOSTILE, ARCADIA CARRIED NO ARMS. IMPROVISATION IS SOLE OPTION, GET THE CUTTING GEAR—NOW!


HALT! RETURN THE CAPTIVE YOU HAVE TAKEN AND I WILL NOT HARM YOU.
YOU WILL NOT HARM US!? NETMEN ADVANCE AND SAVE THE ONE WITH THE SENSE OF HUMOUR FOR ME!
VERY WELL— IT IS YOUR DECISION.
STRIKE!
THE SUPERCOOLED PRESSURISED OXYGEN SPEWED A LETHAL WHITE DEATH AT THE INTRUDERS...
AAAARGH!
PULL BACK! RETREAT!
THEY WILL RETURN. WE MUST HURRY— MOVE THIS GEAR TO ENTERTAINMENTS AND START CUTTING!
LET ME SEE YOUR HANDS FIRST. THEY'LL HAVE BEEN CHILLED NEAR TO ABSOLUTE ZERO...
B-BUT THEY'RE UNMARKED. YOU SHOULD BE HIDEOUSLY MAIMED.
IT IS NOT IMPORTANT.
IT IS DAMN WELL IMPORTANT, CROSS! YOU TALK LIKE A COMPUTER, YOU WALK THROUGH WALLS OF FIRE AND YOUR BODY DOES NOT OBEY THE RULES OF PHYSICS!
JUST WHO— OR WHAT— ARE YOU, MISTER?!
I KNOW FROM THE PASSENGER LIST THAT YOU ARE JIN KIMAS. YOU HAVE LIMITED PSI-POWERS AND THESE WILL BE USEFUL TO ME IN LEADING YOU TO SAFETY.
I DO NOT YET FULLY UNDERSTAND THE CONCEPT OF 'TRUST'. BUT I MUST TRUST YOU, JIN KIMAS, IF I WANT YOU TO HELP ME...
THIS IS WHAT I AM...
OH! OH MY...! I FEEL SICK...!
WHAT HAS JIN SEEN? WHO IS CROSS? FIND OUT NEXT MONTH...


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